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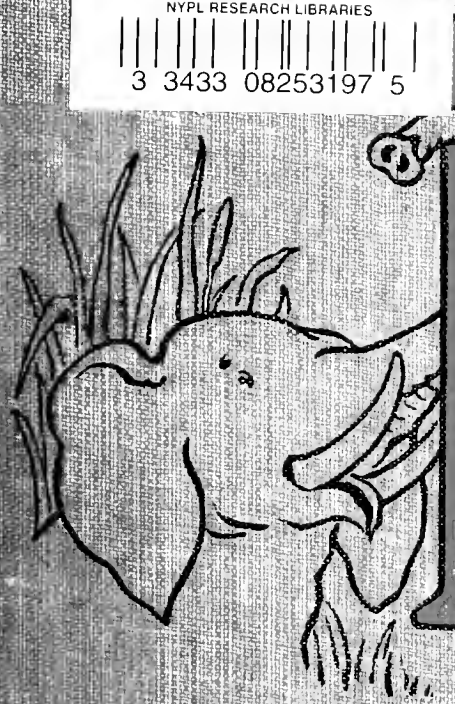

TWO IN A ZOO

By CURTIS DUNHAM
And OLIVER HERFORD

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TWO IN A ZOO

He saw the Princess coming, dragging after her a large man.

TWO IN A ZOO

By

CURTIS DUNHAM

and

OLIVER HERFORD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
OLIVER HERFORD

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TWO IN A ZOO

FULL PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

He saw the Princess coming, dragging after her a large man—*Frontispiece*

"Toots, tell me as you did yesterday, what the elephants are saying" 7

The soft brown eyes of Dozel were fixed on the face of the little Limping Boy 29

The coffee-colored little image of its mother lay sprawling across her broad nose 63

Suddenly the Princess exclaimed: "Oh, here comes Reginald!" 95

The rabbit stuck one of its ears straight up 139

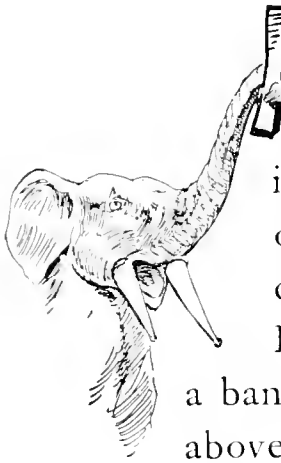
TWO IN A ZOO

I

The Roar of the Jungle

Oh, the sweet, fresh breath of the morning breeze,
And the trumpet call of my mate!
Oh, the fierce, wild wind that bends the trees
Where the great hills sit in state!
Oh, the tender twigs in the Jungle deeps!
Oh, the soft, moist earth where the long grass sweeps!

Song of the Captive Elephant.



MAHMOUD, swinging his wrinkled old trunk to and fro dejectedly, ignored the stack of fresh timothy which the Keeper had dumped on the floor of the Elephant House. There was a band of iron clasped tightly just above one of his great forefeet. Mahmoud had surged back in his discontent till the chain, attached to the iron and to a

ring in the floor, creaked with the strain upon it. His broad ears flapped forward listlessly, but not far enough to conceal the moisture in his dim old eyes which gathered now and then into glistening drops that rolled down his cheeks and were lost in the huge wrinkles at the corners of his mouth. Duchess, his faithful mate, who stood at his side twisting up bunches of hay and tucking them into her mouth, understood and was sad. At intervals in her repast she would pause to stroke Mahmoud's furrowed cheek with the tip of her trunk. But her sorrowful mate was not to be wooed from his melancholy.

Presently, from a little distance up the Park walk leading to the door of the Elephant House, came a familiar tinkling sound that caused Mahmoud to turn his head in that direction with a show of interest. A boy was approaching, and at every step some

straps of iron on his little crooked leg clanked together. The sound was not unlike that made by the iron on Mahmoud's leg. The boy's face was pale, but his eyes were blue and very bright. A little girl skipped along at his side. The boy's clothes were shabby, but the little girl's plumage was rich and as gay as that of some tropical bird. Perhaps it was this that caused the boy to call her "Princess," when he made slow and deferential response to her eager chatter. It was plain that she was accustomed to rule, for whenever she was admonished by the young woman in dark clothes who followed a few steps behind with a book under her arm, she would merely shrug her pretty shoulders. Her manner toward the boy was a trifle condescending, but it was also affectionate, for she called him "Toots."

The entire front of the Elephant House

was open, for it was summer. When Toots and the Princess had reached the iron railing within a yard of Mahmoud's swaying trunk, they stopped. The young woman in dark clothes seemed to understand that this was their destination, for she seated herself on a bench at the side of the walk, and was soon deep in the pages of her book.

Mahmoud shuffled forward as far as the chain on his leg would let him, thrust forth his trunk and felt gently the iron on the boy's crippled leg.

"Oh, Toots, he knows you!" exclaimed the Princess. "That is what he did yesterday."

Though the Princess shrank back, Toots showed no fear. Appearing satisfied as to the boy's identity, Mahmoud turned to his mate, and they stood cheek by cheek, swaying their trunks in unison.

TWO IN A ZOO

"They are talking again," said the Princess, with a little shriek of delight. "Toots, you must tell me what they are saying to each other."

Toots did not stir. A flush of pink had stolen into his pale cheeks. There was a far-away look in his eyes, yet they were sparkling. His lips were moving, but no sound came from them at first. Strange mumblings were coming from the cavernous mouths of the elephants. The Princess stamped her foot with authority and commanded:

"Toots, tell me, as you did yesterday, what the elephants are saying."

But already, in a low, monotonous voice, as though in a dream, the boy was interpreting the talk of Mahmoud and his mate.

"Behold, it is the little Limping Boy," said Mahmoud, with his lips close to the ear

of Duchess. "My old eyes are dim, but with my two fingers have I felt the iron on his leg, and I know it is he."

"Verily, it is he, my Lord," answered Duchess, caressingly. "And with him again is the strange little bird without wings—or, mayhap the gaudy creature is of his own people."

"It is well. Do you recall, O Light of my Life, how the little Limping Boy stood at our door and talked softly to himself? I remember such a boy long, long ago in the Jungle, before the days of my captivity, only he was naked and had brown skin—as brown as that of my baby sister."

"I, too, saw and heard him, my Lord. I thought he talked of us and pitied us in our captivity."

Now Mahmoud ceased his talk and for a moment reflected deeply. At length he said:

"Toots, tell me as you did yesterday, what the elephants are saying."

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"Lo, there are two worlds, O Light of my Life, the Master World and the Menial World; and few there be that stand between. I know not how it happens that we, thou and I, my beloved, are of the Menial World, but it is so. We be Menial People, and the little Limping Boy is of the Master People; yet it clings in my mind that he is nearer."

Again Mahmoud paused to reflect; but Duchess broke in with conviction, saying:

"My Lord, may it not be that the little Limping Boy is one that stands between?"

"That is a matter upon which I have pondered deeply," sighed Mahmoud. "It is evident that he understands our talk. He has the iron upon his leg, yet his talk is not the talk of the Menial People. Alas, I can not be sure on this point. These Master People have strange ways and a strange

tongue. When their skins are dark, as they are in the Jungle, their talk is not so difficult; but when their skins are white and covered with strange raiment, their words convey no meaning to my ears."

Mahmoud's head drooped again. He was very old, and, like all those who are burdened with years, he was wont to ponder sadly on the joys of his past. But presently he raised his head and seemed to be listening.

"Look, Friend of my Youth," he said, after a moment, "is it the chirp of our merry little gossip, the sparrow, that I hear?

"No, my Lord," answered Duchess, soothingly, "Pwit-Pwit is late this morning. I tremble when I recall his boastful tale of yesterday; how he entered the cage of the lioness' treacherous young cubs."

"Be calm, beloved," said Mahmoud, "the

cubs are not too young to know the Law of the Menial People."

It appeared that Duchess, being of the weaker sex, and devoted to her domestic duties, had but a vague notion of the Law. So Mahmoud, with much dignity, enlightened her in these words:

"It is the Law of the Menial People, O Joy of my Heart, that Pwit-Pwit, the sparrow, shall go and come at his pleasure throughout the Menial World, enjoying the hospitality and protection of all. And of a truth this is meet, for is not the sparrow official news-gatherer and gossip for all the Menial People? Verily, is not he the only one of our world that is not locked fast in a yard or in an iron cage by the Master People? Lo, when we of the Menial World were brought by our masters from the forests and plains and jungles to the place of

our captivity, Pwit-Pwit was already here to give us welcome. Therefore, it is the Law of the Menial World that no claw nor tooth shall be raised against him."

When Mahmoud had finished his discourse the sparrow suddenly dropped out of the sky at his feet with a chirp and a cheerful toss of his head.

"You are late to breakfast this morning, little one," said Mahmoud; "but I waited for you, O Messenger of Cheer, though my beloved mate has eaten a few mouthfuls, being hungrier than I."

"I would have been here sooner," answered the sparrow, "but I found it necessary to give one of those young lions a lesson. He forgot about the Law, and tried to catch me in his mouth. But I was too quick for him. You should have seen me then. I flew at his eyes and gave them a good pecking.

Then I had to go and tell his mother. Didn't you hear her roaring at the little upstart to behave himself? Oh, you can trust me to educate those young lions in the Law."

"Verily, I heard the mother lion roar, and feared for you," said Mahmoud. "But come, there are some choice grass seeds in the deep wrinkles of my neck, and I will scatter more there for you. If you are tired, you can step on the end of my trunk and I will lift you up to your breakfast."

But Pwit-Pwit said that he was not at all tired. He flew up to Mahmoud's shoulders and was soon pecking greedily at the seeds which he found in the wrinkles between the great flapping ears. Duchess had resumed her repast, and Mahmoud began attacking the stack of timothy with manifest appetite. As the two friends, one so huge and the other

so tiny, took their breakfast together, the sparrow chirped a constant torrent of gossip, which Toots, never hesitating, interpreted for the Princess. At length only some scattering wisps were left of the stack that the Keeper had brought for the old elephant. Mahmoud gathered them up, sweeping his trunk over the floor daintily, then rolled them into a little bundle, which he thrust half-way into the side of his mouth. Then, rolling his trunk about the ends of the wisps containing the dried grass seeds, he tore them off, and holding them back over his head, said to Pwit-Pwit:

"Are you there, little one?"

"Here I am, right between your ears," chirped the sparrow.

"Look then for the large round seeds," said Mahmoud. "But first brace yourself well behind my ear, little one, for I am going to blow the dust out of your breakfast. Dust is not good for the stomach."

With these words Mahmoud blew a little puff of wind through his trunk into the handful of grass seed about which it was curled, and then dropped the seeds in a little shower right at Pwit-Pwit's feet.

"Thank you," said the sparrow. "You have found me a delicious breakfast." And he pecked away at the seeds until he could hold no more.

Then Pwit-Pwit noticed that Mahmoud had stopped eating and was swinging his trunk about in a mournful manner.

"What's the matter, old chap?" chirped

the sparrow. "Have you lost your appetite?"

"Alas!" sighed the old elephant, "I pine for the roar of my native Jungle, little one. I long to plunge through the great, wild forest and feel the swish of the branches at my sides. Even the chatter of idle and foolish monkeys would be music in my ears."

The sparrow hopped up on the rim of Mahmoud's ear, and said cheerily:

"Why don't you go home for a visit?"

"Alas, little one, I am too old, even if the Master People would release me. Never again shall I breathe the fresh breath of the hills; never again hear the roar of the Jungle."

Mahmoud's head drooped lower than before. Pwit-Pwit pecked at his ear to get his attention, and chirped:

"Cheer up, old chap, I can't bring the Jungle to you, 'tis true; but I think I can manage the roar all right."

TWO IN A ZOO

"Pride of my Heart," said Mahmoud, turning eagerly to his faithful mate and stroking her cheek, "do you hear? Pwit-Pwit, the all-wise, says he can gladden our ears once more with the roar of the Jungle."

"Pwit-Pwit, if you can do that," said Duchess, trembling with joy, "we will be your slaves."

"Oh, it is nothing, nothing at all," chirped the sparrow with affected modesty. "I will go and prepare all the Menial People for the signal, and when I return I will tell you what to do."

Having chirped this promise into Mahmoud's grateful ear, the sparrow flew down from the old elephant's back, and hopped past the little Limping Boy and entered the adjoining house of the two-horned rhinoceros. Toots and the Princess could see

all that occurred from where they stood. The great beast was lazily sharpening his horns on the hardwood planks of his house. Pwit-Pwit flew at his eyes, at which he pecked saucily, saying:

"Attention, pig! Be ready for the signal. When you hear it, if you have any voice left in your fat old carcass, use it, or never hope to hear the roar of the Jungle again."

Hearing these words, the dull-witted beast began lifting up first one foot and then another, in a sort of clumsy dance. The sparrow, perceiving that he was eager for the roar of the Jungle, wasted no more words on him, but flew straight up in the air and then darted off toward the house of the lions, tigers and leopards. Toots and the Princess saw him fly in through the open door, then, after a moment of silence, heard muffled roars from the lions, followed by the

excited chatter of monkeys in the adjoining house, and soon beheld him emerge and dart toward the dens of the bears.

"The sparrow is keeping his word," said the Princess, clapping her hands. "He is warning all the Menial People to be ready for the signal."

"Hush," said the little Limping Boy, in a low voice. "Look at Mahmoud and the Duchess."

The Princess looked, and beheld a most astonishing sight. The old elephants had twined their trunks together above their heads and were waving them as though in time to music.

"They are singing," said Toots. "They are singing about the happy times they had long, long ago in the great forest where they were born."

The Princess could not hear the song, but

she beheld the waving trunks and felt certain that Toots could hear it. As they sang, the old elephants grew each moment more excited. So engrossed were they with the memories that inspired them that they forgot the sparrow utterly. When Pwit-Pwit returned, he had to fly up and peck at their eyes to get their attention.

"Do stop your singing and pay attention," chirped the sparrow, petulantly. "You can sing at any time. Listen. I have prepared all the Menial People for the signal. They are waiting. You can hear the chatter of those idiotic monkeys at this moment. A monkey can never keep a secret."

"The lions," said Mahmoud, eagerly, "are the lions ready?"

"The lions were delighted," answered Pwit-Pwit; "they can hardly wait for the signal."

"And Caliph and Fatimah, the old hippopotami—"

"They, too, are ready," interrupted the sparrow, impatiently. "I told you I could manage it, and I have. The signal! The signal!"

As he gave this order, Pwit-Pwit flew up to his favorite perch on Mahmoud's ear. The elephants, trembling with excitement, turned their faces toward the Lion House and wagged their trunks aloft. Mahmoud's eyes opened to twice their usual size, and the little Limping Boy thought that they shone red, as though from anger. He was half afraid, and wondered what was going to happen. The Princess clasped his hand tightly in one of hers, and he could feel that she was trembling.

"It must be all right," said Toots, "or the sparrow would fly away. See, he still

sits on the rim of the old elephant's ear, as calm as you please."

Suddenly Mahmoud straightened out his trunk to its full length toward the Lion House, and blew through it a blast that rang in the ears of the two children for many a day after. Duchess followed with another, shriller and more ear-splitting. Then the two elephants paused to listen. Almost immediately they were answered from the Lion House. First, Sultan replied with a deep, terrible roar that caused Mahmoud's eyes to sparkle with delight. Then Caliph, the patriarch of all the hippopotami, joined his voice to that of the old lion. It was a voice like the sound of a mighty waterfall. Between the roars of Sultan and Caliph could be heard those of Fatimah and Cyrus, the younger hippopotami, whose voices were less deep and steady, because not so well trained.

From all directions came answers to Mahmoud's signal. There was the snarling scream of the tigers, leopards and pumas; the wolves and hyenas barked in their wild and dreadful way; the bears growled; eagles screamed; the shrieking chatter of the monkeys was ear-splitting. The two-horned rhinoceros grunted terribly. The solitary elephant next door, who was in disgrace for attacking the Keeper, put his four feet close together, humped up his back and trumpeted so loudly that Mahmoud and Duchess held their breath and listened, overcome with joy.

At length, having recognized the voices of all the Menial People, Mahmoud and Duchess again stretched forth their trunks and trumpeted with all their might. At this the efforts of all the animals were redoubled. This was indeed the roar of the

Jungle. The ground seemed to tremble, so terrible was the din. The Keeper, who often went fearlessly into the cage of Sultan, even putting his hand in the great brute's mouth, could be seen running from the Lion House, pale, and with his hair on end. And through it all the sparrow never moved from his perch on the rim of Mahmoud's ear.

But after a while the roar gradually died out, leaving all the Menial People breathless and covered with perspiration.

"Aha," said Pwit-Pwit, into the ear of old Mahmoud, "didn't I tell you I could manage the roar of the Jungle?"

"Little one," answered the grateful beast, gasping for breath, "we are your slaves from this day on."

"Nonsense," chirped back the sparrow; "it was fun for me, too. Never before was heard such a roar. The Master People were

terrified. Did you not observe them flying in all directions?"

"Ay, little one, I saw them, and it gladdened my old heart. Even the Keeper, he that is so proud and stout of heart, fled as I have seen his brown-skinned brothers flee before my onslaught in the Jungle. Verily, all the Master People fled—"

Mahmoud stopped, with his eye fixed in astonishment on the little Limping Boy, who stood as before, with his arms on the iron railing, calm and unmoved. As though doubting the evidence of his eyes, Mahmoud put forth his trunk, and with the two fingers at its end felt of the iron on the boy's leg. Then he turned to Duchess and said:

"Behold, O Light of my Life, of all the Master People only the little Limping Boy remained, his soul unterrified by the roar of the Jungle. With my two fingers have I

again felt the iron on his leg. No longer do I doubt."

Then turning to the sparrow, Mahmoud, Lord of all the Menial People, gave this command:

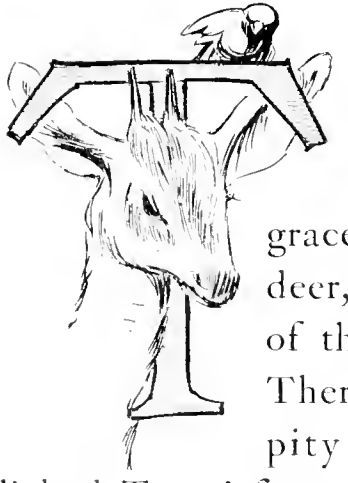
"Go forth, little one, to all my people; to the lions, to the tigers, to the hippopotami, to the old dromedary who stands all day blinking in the sun, yea, even to the chattering monkeys, and say: Lo, this is the command of Mahmoud, that no harm shall befall the little Limping Boy, for verily, he doth stand between. I have spoken."

The sparrow flew away to do his master's bidding, and from that day on Toots was able to interpret for the Princess even the sign language spoken by the blinking old dromedary, who to all but him was the sphinx of the Zoo, deep of thought, but generally uncommunicative.

CHAPTER II

Despised Relations

Oh, behold us, and dispute us if you can!
Only look upon our faces,
On our more than human graces,
And observe the many traces
Of our kinship with our noble brother, Man!
—*Song of the Ambitious Monkeys.*



THE great round, soft, brown eyes of Dozel, most slender-limbed and graceful of the herd of Indian deer, were fixed on the face of the little Limping Boy. There seemed to be a look of pity in their depths. She licked Toots' fingers, and the Princess tried in vain to attract her attention.

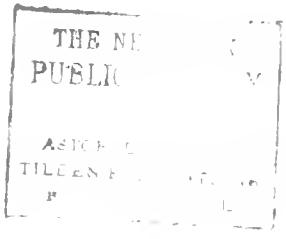
"Do you suppose the sparrow has already told her of Mahmoud's command?" asked the Princess.

"I don't know," answered Toots; "I think so, but I haven't quite made up my mind yet."

"Dozel seems more affectionate toward you than ever," argued the Princess. "Yesterday she licked my hand, but to-day she has eyes only for you, Toots."

"It must be so, then," said the little Limping Boy. "You remember that when the elephant ordered Pwit-Pwit to go and tell all the Menial People that I stood between the two worlds, and that no harm should befall me, the sparrow flew away immediately. But, look! here comes Pwit-Pwit now. He and Dozel are going to have their morning chat. Keep quite still, and I'll tell you what they say."

The soft, brown eyes of Dozel were fixed on the face of the little Limping Boy.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The Princess put her finger on her lip and looked significantly at Toots, as the sparrow perched herself on the top rail of the yard, within a foot of Dozel's ear, and began to chirp. The Princess saw the familiar, dreamy look come into Toots' eyes, as he began to translate the gossip of the sparrow and the deer.

"Why are you so sad this morning?" asked Pwit-Pwit. "The weather is simply perfect."

But Dozel merely sighed, and turned her gaze wistfully in the direction of the Elephant House. Nothing so delighted her as the loud trumpetings of Mahmoud and his mate, and she always let her eyes roam in their direction when anything unusual was on her mind.

"You ought to be happy," continued the sparrow; "you certainly never looked hand-

somer, with your brown skin so soft and velvety that the little white spots scattered over it look like snowflakes, and your eyes so clear and tender—tut, tut, now Dozel, my dear. The idea of your crying on a morning like this!"

"I can't help it," whimpered the beautiful creature. "It's enough to make any one weep."

Pwit-Pwit hopped on to Dozel's back and together they took a turn about the yard.

"And I'm blest if you're not limping, you, of all people in the world!" said the sparrow, in astonishment.

"It's out of sympathy," sighed Dozel. "When I think of my own legs, so straight and slender and swift, I can't help thinking of the little Limping Boy and his poor, crooked leg, with the iron on it. There he stands now. Isn't it pitiful? Oh, dear, oh, dear!"

"True, it is very sad," said Pwit-Pwit, soberly; "but what can't be cured must be endured, you know."

"The worst part of it," said the deer, "is that there is something about the little Limping Boy's walk that reminds me of those chattering, screaming monkeys I remember so well in the Jungle. There are some of them over in a corner of the Lion House. I can't bear them."

"Hello!" chirped the sparrow, jubilantly. "So that's your opinion of 'em, too, is it, Dozel, my dear? Well, that's too good to keep. I'll go straight to the monkeys with that, and when they know that it comes from you direct, they'll have a bad half-hour, I can tell you. They won't be any happier than you are then, my dear. Do you know, the impudent creatures actually claim to be related to the birds! As a

general thing, I pay no attention to 'em, but this is different. They feel so sure of your good opinion, you're so sweet and sedate with everybody. My, oh, my, but won't it make 'em wild! I'll go straight to that idiot, Mr. Kelly. Just listen, and you'll hear him jabber himself blue in the face."

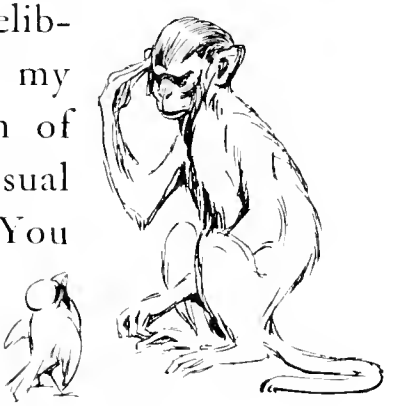
With this, the malicious little bird flew straight into the Lion House, and to Mr. Kelly's corner, Toots and the Princess following as fast as their legs could carry them, the iron on the little Limping Boy's leg clanking all the way.

Now, Mr. Kelly is a very learned monkey, having enjoyed the society of men for quite a number of years. He had had breakfast, and was leisurely picking his teeth. Pwit-Pwit perched himself on the rail just out of reach of his nimble fingers. Truth to tell, the sparrow was so startled at Mr.

Kelly's resemblance to the man who carried the plaster when the bear's den was being repaired, that he was quite civil at first.

"Good morning, Mr. Kelly," he said politely, "are you feeling quite well?"

"So-so," answered the monkey, eying the sparrow with much deliberation. "Except for my neuralgia and a touch of the gout I'm in my usual health, thank you. You don't happen to have a cigar about you, I suppose?"



"Bless me!" said Pwit-Pwit, astounded and quite off his guard, "you don't mean to say you smoke?"

"Had my cigar after breakfast every morning when I was acting in a theater over in the Bowery," said Mr. Kelly. "Seems

that smoking isn't allowed here. These blue laws are beastly, aren't they?"

"Do you find it hard going without?" asked Pwit-Pwit, unable yet to assume his accustomed air of superiority.

"If they would let me taper off I wouldn't mind so much," answered the monkey, with a yawn; "but this stopping all at once is rather trying on the nerves."

Toots shifted his position in front of the monkey's cage, which caused the iron on his leg to jingle. This attracted the attention of Mr. Kelly, who threw away the straw he had been using as a toothpick and came close to the wire netting that surrounded him.

"You heard the command of Mahmoud to all the Menial People touching the little Limping Boy," said the sparrow. "Well, here he is."

Instead of replying, Mr. Kelly began twisting his features into the drollest shapes imaginable.

"Mahmoud's command has made a great stir everywhere," continued Pwit-Pwit. "It has affected Dozel to tears. I left her just now weeping over the misfortunes of the little Limping Boy."

At this Mr. Kelly began to snivel and moan, while two tears rolled down his hairy nose.

"Hello, there! What's the matter with you?" demanded Pwit-Pwit.

The monkey made no reply, but began limping around his cage, moaning and shedding tears, as though heart-broken.

"Oh, I see," said the sparrow, "you're sorry for the little Limping Boy, too."

"I have a fellow-feeling for him," answered Mr. Kelly, and went on with his moaning.

"Why, you—you miserable upstart!" exclaimed Pwit-Pwit, ruffling up his feathers in indignation.

The sparrow would have said more but for the sudden change in Mr. Kelly's manner. The monkey had come back to the front of his cage, and was touching the side of his head with the forefinger of his right hand.

"What are you up to now?" he demanded.

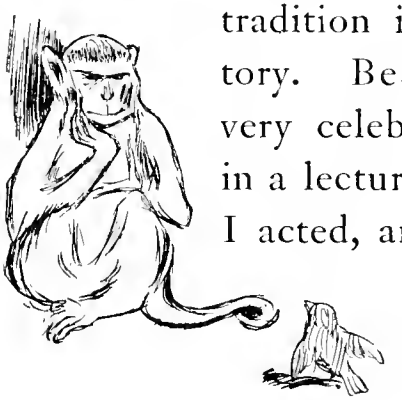
"Saluting my unfortunate distant relation," said Mr. Kelly, who then went on moaning and weeping worse than before.

For a moment the sparrow's indignation was such that he seemed to be deprived of speech. He looked at Mr. Kelly, and then at the little Limping Boy, and then at the monkey again. Then he ruffled up the

feathers of his neck angrily, and said:

"Do you mean to say that you believe yourself to be related to this boy, who will grow into a man some day?"

"That's the tradition in our family," said Mr. Kelly, "and you doubtless know that tradition is the basis of all history. Besides, that's what a very celebrated man once said in a lecture at the theater where I acted, and he had me on the stage with him for an illustration—so he said. Any one can see that there isn't much difference between a monkey and a man, except the clothes. Look for yourself."



And Mr. Kelly placed his right elbow in his left hand, and rested his chin on his right hand, just as the little Limping Boy was doing.

Pwit-Pwit looked from one to the other, and the resemblance was so startling that for a moment he was at a loss what answer to make. Then he caught sight of the monkey's tail, which Mr. Kelly was trying hard to conceal behind him.

"Aha!" chirped the sparrow, exultantly; "what about the tail?"

"None of your business, you meddlesome, gossiping little wretch!" screamed Mr. Kelly, in a passion. And he made a grab for Pwit-Pwit through the wires of his cage, but could not quite reach him.

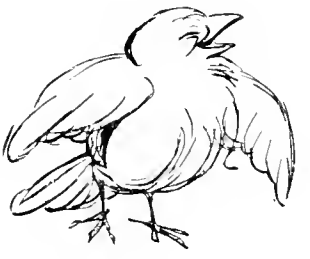
"Be careful," warned the sparrow. "Remember the Law."

"Know this once for all, you insignificant bearer of tales," snarled Mr. Kelly. "Mahmoud himself has said that he was in doubt whether I was of the Menial People, or whether I stood between the two worlds. Ere

long I shall compel him to proclaim that I am neither the one nor the other, but that I am of the Master People. So beware!"

But Pwit-Pwit nearly burst his sides with laughter.

"Do you know what Dozel says about you?" he said finally; "the beautiful young Indian doe at whom you have been making eyes through the wires of your cage ever since she arrived?"



Mr. Kelly suddenly turned very pale. Noticing this, the sparrow went on relentlessly:

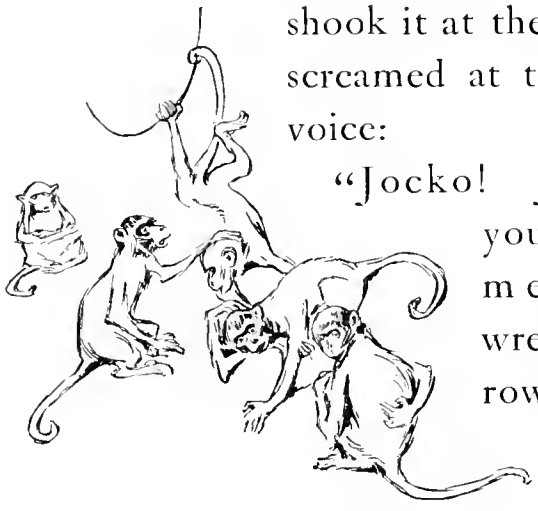
"She says that you and all your tribe are chattering, screaming nobodies."

For a moment the blow seemed almost more than Mr. Kelly could endure.

"Aha, Mr. Kelly," said the sparrow,

insolently, "chattering, screaming nobodies! What do you say to that?"

At this taunt Mr. Kelly nearly exploded with passion. He clenched his hand and shook it at the sparrow, and screamed at the top of his voice:



"Jocko! Jocko! Do you hear? This meddlesome wretch of a sparrow says we are chattering nobodies."

Jocko, the tottering old baboon in his cage on the other side of the Lion House, turned blue in the face with anger.

"Catch him and pull out his tail feathers!" he screamed. "Never mind the Law."

But Pwit-Pwit kept well out of Mr. Kelly's reach. By this time, the little, long-tailed monkeys with black caps and high-pitched voices, living next door to Jocko, were chattering and shrieking at a fearful rate. The sparrow flew about from one cage to another, hurling taunts at the enraged creatures, enjoying himself immensely.

When, at length, the monkeys had chattered and shrieked themselves hoarse, Mr. Kelly commanded them to be silent while he arranged for a final settlement of the dispute. He walked in a dignified manner about his cage until he had recovered his breath, and then said sternly to Pwit-Pwit:

"You are only a foolish little bird, with a great deal to learn. While we care very little for your opinion, it is well that this matter should be settled. Is there any one among all the Menial People whose word

you will accept as the eternal truth?"

"Yes," answered the sparrow, promptly. "There is Caliph, the old hippopotamus. He is very old and very wise, and he always tells the truth—which is more than can be said of monkeys."

"Very well," said Mr. Kelly, calmly, "go and ask Caliph if it is not true that the first man and the first monkey were made out of the same lump of clay long, long ago on the banks of the river Nile. Tell him to lift up his voice when he answers, so that all can hear."

"Agreed," said Pwit-Pwit; "and when you hear old Caliph's answer prepare to hang crape on your door-knob, for it will mean the death of your absurd ambition."

Then, while Mr. Kelly continued to walk about his cage in a dignified manner, the sparrow, followed by Toots and the Prin-

cess, flew quickly to the Hippopotamus House. Straight up to the edge of the deep pool in which Caliph lay, with only an island of black back and his two bulging nostrils showing above the surface of the water, hopped Pwit-Pwit.

"What, ho! Caliph!" chirped the sparrow, "come forth from thy meditations and give ear to a matter of consequence concerning all the Menial People."

At first Caliph only blinked his small eyes. Pwit-Pwit bobbed his head at the monster with evidence of vast respect, and said in a louder voice:

"Greeting, O master of the deep! It is concerning the general welfare that I come to disturb thy reflections on the glorious past. The pretensions of the monkeys have grown past all bounds, so that there is menace to the general peace. The trouble

happened in this wise: Mr. Kelly, who is only a poor sort of monkey, at best, claims kinship with the Master World, whereat there is much discontent and not a little jealousy. He avers that the first monkey and the first man were made out of the same lump of clay on the banks of the Nile. Is this the truth? Speak, I pray you, in tones that may be heard by all, that the trouble which threatens us may be averted."

While the sparrow thus spoke, Caliph raised his head slowly out of the water. Seven times did he open and close his enormous mouth. At length, in a voice that rang throughout the Menial World, he spoke as follows:

"Harken unto me, all ye Menial People. As to the first monkey, it was in this wise: When the first man had been made, his shadow fell upon some very poor clay that

had been thrown away. And it came to pass that when the first man walked, and his shadow walked after him, the poor clay upon which the shadow rested rose and ran shrieking into the forest. And, lo! it was a monkey. Behold, I have spoken."

When Caliph had sunk beneath the water again, Pwit-Pwit, with his head on one side, listened eagerly for the comments of the other Menial People, and Toots, with his hand placed warningly on the Princess, listened, too. First, Mahmoud trumpeted his acquiescence:

"It is true. I heard it from my father in the Jungle one day when these insolent chatterers were particularly annoying. The monkeys are but as chips that fall from the hewn log."

"Behold, Caliph's words are the words of wisdom," said Sultan, patriarch of the

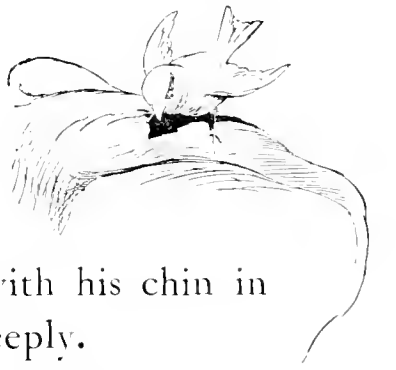
lions, in his deepest roar. "I, who was born in the shadow of the great pyramids, had it from my father, who had it from the father of Caliph when he went down to the Nile to drink. Lo! the monkeys are as the chaff when the wheat is winnowed."

"I am not of that country," said the old dromedary from the plains of Arabia; "but my cousins, the camels, known to all the world as ships of the desert, brought the news to my people. By the fat in my hump, I swear that Caliph speaks the truth."

"My grandmother had it from an aged crocodile who crawled up on the bank of the Nile to sun herself, just as she was laying in the hot sand the egg that hatched my mother," screamed the old cock ostrich. "The monkeys are of no more consequence than straws blown by the wind."

And no voice among the Menial People

was silent. Those who had no testimony to add to that of Caliph, roared and screeched and howled their approval of it. But the monkeys did not remain long abashed at the verdict against them. When Pwit-Pwit, followed by Toots and the Princess, returned to observe its effect upon them, they found Mr. Kelly sitting cross-legged on his overturned water bucket, with his chin in his hand, meditating deeply.



"Well," chirped Pwit-Pwit, "did you hear the verdict of old Caliph?"

"Eh?" said Mr. Kelly, raising his head abstractedly. "Hum, ah, oh, yes, I heard it."

"And the corroboration of all the other Menial People?"

"All my expectations were verified," said

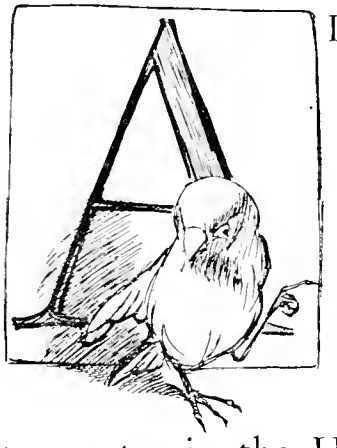
Mr. Kelly, complacently. "Malice and prejudice were so apparent that every logical mind will at once class the statements of Caliph and his satellites as perjured testimony. My contention, therefore, is sustained."

Too perplexed and astonished to make any reply, Pwit-Pwit flew away to his favorite perch on the rim of Mahmoud's ear, where he sat, crestfallen, for fully three and a quarter minutes.

CHAPTER III

Close thine eyes, my beauty bright,
  Dream, dream of the flowing Nile,
Where thy mother first saw light---
  (Ah, sweet is thine infant smile!)
Close thy pretty baby mouth,
  Close, close thy blinking eye;
Dream of the joyous, sunny South---
  Lullaby, lullaby.

—*Hippopotamus Cradle Song.*



ALL the morning there had been an excited running to and fro among the Keepers of the Menial World. Evidences of a stupendous mystery were apparent on every hand. It seemed to center in the Hippopotamus House, the doors of which were locked and barred, as well as those of the Lion House adjoining it.

The Princess, devoured by curiosity, deluged Toots with questions. While awaiting developments, they were feeding peanuts to Zuelma, the vain young mother ostrich. For quite a while the little Limping Boy was unable to get any light on the mystery.

"If the sparrow were only here," said the Princess, "there would be a lot of gossip about it; wouldn't there, Toots?"

"Yes," answered the boy; "but we won't have to wait long. Listen, Mahmoud is beginning to rumble through his trunk. Twice old Sultan has roared under his breath, and a moment ago the tigers were snarling. The secret will soon be out—"

At that instant, Sultan, patriarch of the lions, delivered himself of a mighty roar. Even the Princess could tell by the sound of it that it was not a roar of anger.

"Good!" said Toots, "that is old

Sultan's call for rejoicing. Now listen."

Mahmoud was first to reply. The old elephant trumpeted a hearty response, in which the other elephants joined. After that there were growls from the bears, snarls from the tigers and pumas, and an extraordinary chattering among the monkeys. Throughout all the Menial World there was only one note of discord, one failure to respond heartily to the call for rejoicing. When the other voices had subsided, up spoke the aged striped hyena in his evil-tempered voice, demanding:

"Wherefore rejoice? What has befallen in the Lion House that gives cause for rejoicing?"

The roar with which Sultan prefaced his reply was so terrible that the ill-favored beast cowered back into the farthest corner of his den. Said Sultan:

"Not for this suspicious, thieving, ill-conditioned creature, but for all the loyal inhabitants of the Menial World shall the answer be given. Harken to the voice of Caliph, the Wise."

For a moment there was deep silence. Then spoke Caliph, patriarch of the hippopotami, in his rumbling roar, resembling that of the cataracts of the Upper Nile, within the sound of which his youth had been spent:

"Lo, Fatimah, my beloved mate, hath an infant daughter. Mother and child are doing well; therefore, rejoice."

Whereat there was such general and hearty rejoicing that all the houses of the

Menial People rocked on their foundations. But when the sound of it had died away, the aged hyena could be heard snarling:

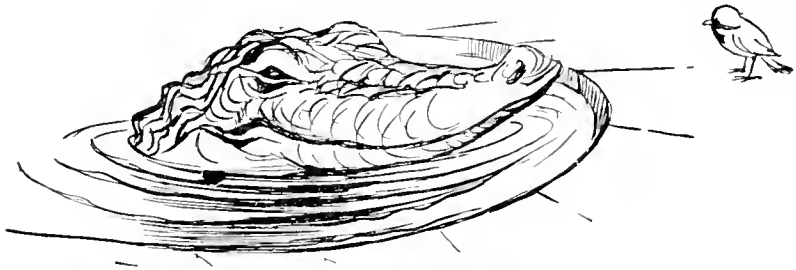
"Pooh! only one? Though my mate brought me four daughters and a son one morning as I was gnawing the leg bone of a sheep, yet I made no uproar about it."

"That is because you are a selfish, thieving, carrion-eating old hypocrite," thundered back Caliph.

Zuelma, with her bill wide open, as is her custom while listening, stood with her long neck craned over the head of

the little Limping Boy, in whose hand that of the Princess—somewhat frightened by the uproar among the animals—was tightly clasped. Suddenly, Pwit-Pwit, the Sparrow gossip and news-gatherer for all the Menial People, fluttered down at her feet.

"I have been expecting you for an hour," said the ostrich. "Now, thank goodness,



we shall know the truth, after all this roaring and trumpeting. How is it, Pwit-Pwit, that so much fuss is made over a single baby? Were the other eggs eaten by the crocodiles?"

"As soon as I heard the call for rejoicing," said the sparrow, "I flew at once to the Hippopotamus House; but the door was

shut and no one came to let me in. But it sticks in my mind, Zuelma, that the young of the Hippopotamus are not hatched from eggs."

At this, Zuelma, who was a mother herself, laughed scornfully.

"If you were not a giddy, gadding sparrow," she said, "with neither mate nor nest of your own, you would know that without eggs and hot sand to hatch them in, there would be no young in the world. Come, go and try again. By this time the door should be open."

The sparrow was no quicker than were Toots and the Princess to profit by this hint. They found the outer door of the Hippopotamus House still closed; but that of the Lion House was open, and also one connecting the two. As Pwit-Pwit hopped past the cage of the frolicsome lion cubs, they

tumbled over each other in their eagerness to greet him.

"Ho, Pwit-Pwit," they roared in their babyish voices, "stop and tell us the news."

"Wait till I come back," chirped the sparrow; "I'm busy now."

And he hurried on into the Hippopotamus House and to the big tank where old Caliph

was cooling himself after the excitement of the morning. Toots and the Princess stopped within a yard of him, eager to hear what was said between them.

"Is it indeed true?" demanded Pwit-Pwit. "Are you for the second time a father?"

Caliph blinked at the sparrow, and seemed to be turning something over in his mind. Presently he opened his mouth at least a yard and snorted so loudly that the sparrow's feathers were drenched with the spray from his nostrils.

"Such manners!" exclaimed Pwit-Pwit, shaking himself vigorously. "What on earth are you laughing at?"

"Father for the second time," repeated Caliph, with a broad smile. "Why, little one, my age is at least three-quarters of a century, and all of our family wedded young. At

least a score of the young with which Fatimah has presented me are to-day rolling about the broad earth in gaudily painted wheeled tanks for the amusement of the Master World. Therefore, excuse me if I smile decorously at your inquiry if it be true that I am indeed a father for the second time."

"Where are Fatimah and the new baby?" demanded the sparrow, shortly, for Pwit-Pwit never approved of laughter at his own expense.

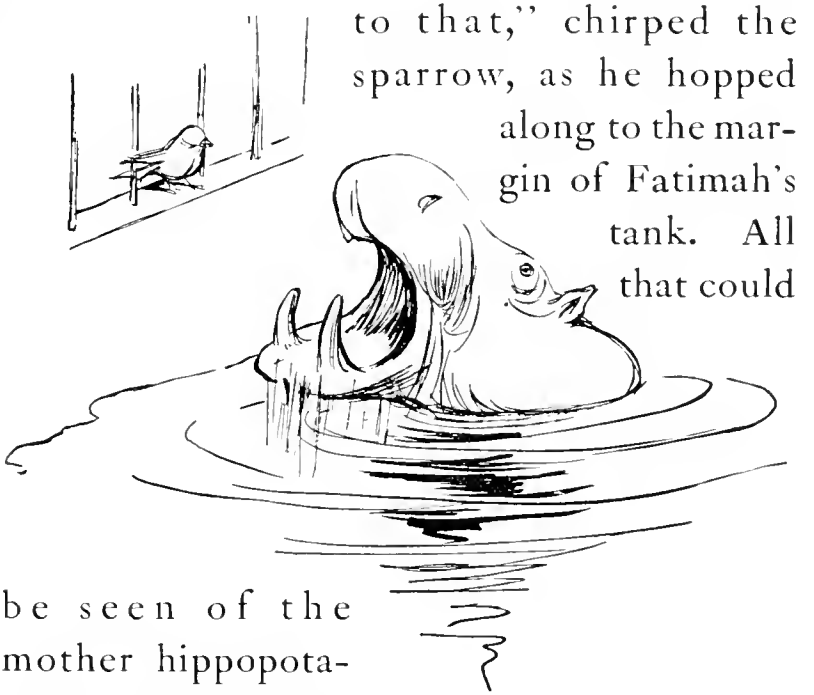
"You'll find them over in the next tank," answered the father hippopotamus. "Never yet was there such a baby for the water. He has been to the surface to breathe only twice since he was born. He will be a great hippopotamus when he grows up."

"Do you mean to say," said Pwit-Pwit, in surprise, "that Fatimah found

the baby in the water to begin with?"

"Why, certainly," answered Caliph, "where would you expect to find a new baby hippopotamus?"

"Well, I wonder what Zuelma will say to that," chirped the sparrow, as he hopped along to the margin of Fatimah's tank. All that could be seen of the mother hippopotamus was a glistening yard or so of her black back. This was floating about the tank in a



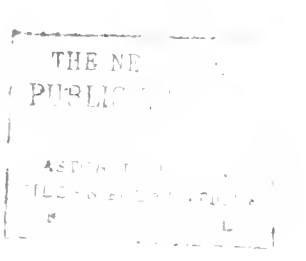
manner that indicated no little agitation below the surface. The cause was apparent when Fatimah lifted her head out of the water, and said to Caliph:

"Alas! our new-born daughter is lost again. I have searched every corner of the tank in vain. Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Do not agitate yourself, my beloved," answered Caliph. "The little one is mischievous. Thus it was, I remember, with our first-born. Verily, it is a good sign."

Suddenly, while Caliph was speaking, Fatimah plunged her nose into the water, made a scooping motion, and rose quickly to the surface, bringing the missing baby with her. The Princess shrieked with delight at sight of the coffee-colored little image of its mother which lay sprawling across her broad nose, blinking its

The coffee-colored little image of its mother lay sprawling across her broad nose.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eyes and blowing spray from its nostrils.

"A fine child, Fatimah," said Pwit-Pwit. "Many happy returns of the day."

"Thank you very much, I'm sure," said Fatimah, while the new baby shook its small ears in imitation of its mother. "But what a care these babies are," she added with a sigh, "nobody but a mother knows."

Toots would have sworn that at this moment Caliph winked slyly at his new daughter, and that the baby gave her father an answering wink. At any rate, as Fatimah finished speaking, the baby slid from her nose into the water with a splash, and sank out of sight.

"Drat the child!" said Fatimah. "There's no use," she added with a snort that sent a ripple of waves over the surface of the water; "she will do it. I shall simply leave her there, young as she is, till she is obliged

to come up for air. By the way, Pwit-Pwit, little one, how are Cleopatra and her monkey baby this morning?"

"Quite well, thank you," answered the sparrow, "and Cleopatra sends congratulations."

"Caliph, my love," said Fatimah, "I really think that in honor of the occasion, we should send a polite message to Cleopatra. To be sure, I don't approve of monkeys at all, but babies are babies, you know."

"Very well," said Caliph, gruffly, "send the chattering young creature any message you like, only keep me out of it."

"My experience certainly is greater than Cleopatra's," said Fatimah, addressing the sparrow, "and I would warn her against allowing her baby to lie overlong in the sun. It is apt to crack the skin. I remember when my first child was born—"

"Why, bless my eyes!" interrupted Pwit-Pwit, with a giggle, "Cleopatra asked me to warn you against letting your baby get its feet wet."

"Well, I never!" gasped Fatimah in astonishment, while Caliph opened his mouth till the Princess told Toots in a whisper that she could see clear into his stomach, and laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Well, I must be going," said the sparrow. "Everybody is dying for the news. Have you named the baby yet, Fatimah?"

"She shall be called Delilah, for her beauty," said the proud mother, as her baby came gasping and sputtering to the surface. As Fatimah put down her nose for her child to clamber upon, she said in a tone of loving triumph:

"So-so, my child, it seems you still have

some use for mother. Now will you be good?"

Again the lion cubs roared at Pwit-Pwit as he was passing, demanding the news:

"Where did the hippopotamus baby come from? Did somebody leave the door open?"

"Fatimah found it at the bottom of her swimming tank," answered the sparrow, and he passed on, leaving the cubs staring at each other in wonderment.

When Pwit-Pwit had made the rounds with his gossip about the new baby, all the Menial People who felt that their experience entitled them to give advice touching the bringing up of children, addressed themselves, one at a time, to Fatimah and Caliph.

"As to the new babe," said the dromedary, speaking first, "I would give a bit of advice. Many a babe has suffered in its early days from lack of water. So it was with my

brother. His tongue became so parched that he was never able to converse above a whisper. I pray you, madam, to see that your babe has water to drink at least once a week."

"Ho-ho, ha-ha!" laughed Caliph. "Water once a week, and only to drink—"

"Hush, my dear," said Fatimah, "the dromedary means well, but, being of the desert, he knows no better."

"If you would have his legs grow slim and straight," said Dozel, the Indian doe, "you must let him run over the hills as much as possible while yet young. But I would warn you to beware of the dogs and wolves."

"For exercise to strengthen the body there is nothing like leaping," roared Sultan, the lion. "Before I was a year old I could leap full twenty feet to the shoulders of an antelope, and never miss."

"Ho-ho, ha-ha!" roared Caliph again, till reproved by Fatimah. But the picture of any hippopotamus, young or old, running over the hills, or leaping on to the shoulders of an antelope, was irresistibly funny, and Caliph continued to chuckle till Duchess, Mahmoud's faithful mate, concluded the chapter on how to bring up a young hippopotamus with the following sensible advice:

"Behold, O Fatimah," she said, "one or two matters which may have slipped your memory, upon which I would give you counsel. If the mother be sound, and the newborn babe be without blot or blemish, there is little to be feared. Yet, in my time, have I seen the young over-eager for their food, so that they grow to be unnaturally ravenous, in time ruining their digestion and destroying their moral sense. Such a disposition noticed early in infancy

is easily corrected, as you well know. If your babe displays an inclination to turn her head more to one side than to the other when sleeping, I would remind you that this is frequently the cause of an ill-balanced skull, destructive of that beautiful symmetry characteristic of the normal adult members of both our species. Moreover, let not thy offspring accustom herself to chewing her food on one side of her mouth—a common affectation among infants. The danger from this source is teeth short on one side and long on the other, and a jaw awry. In these days, as you well know, Fatimah, it is difficult to obtain for a daughter a desirable mate if she be not well favored."

"Thank you, my dear," said Fatimah, when Duchess had ceased speaking. "You'll excuse me now, I'm sure; my baby hasn't had a nap since it was born."

Presently, all through the Menial World was heard the plaintive melody of the Hippopotamus Cradle Song, and for an hour after it had ceased, even Pwit-Pwit and the Monkeys were silent.

CHAPTER IV

IN the absence of the Princess, it was the little Limping Boy's habit, when visiting his friends of the Menial World, to interpret for his own entertainment the conversations he overheard. He believed that he did this only in his mind, but on several occasions he had translated the language of Caliph or Mahmoud in such loud tones, influenced by the exciting character of their discourse, that other visitors had looked at each other significantly, tapping their foreheads and smiling. Of all this, however, the little Limping Boy, fortunately, was oblivious.

One morning he stood alone before the door of Mahmoud and the Duchess. It

was the day after the Keeper and several helpers had thrown Mahmoud's mate on her side, tied her fast with ropes, and, with hammer and chisel, had pared her toe-nails, which had grown so long as to lame her. The elephants stood with their heads together, swaying their trunks. The boy at once perceived that they were discussing the nail-paring incident.

"Of a truth," said Mahmoud, "when the men came with ropes I was as apprehensive as thou, O Light of my Life. Thou wert aged and lame, and I trembled at the thought that they were about to put thee out of thy misery. Happily, it was not so. And thy lameness this morning, my beloved, hath it disappeared?"

"My Lord," said Duchess, "my four feet are now as firm on the ground as when, years ago, I ran free and thoughtless in the

Jungle. I feel no pain, and my heart is filled with gratitude to the men with the knives who looked so cruel and were yet so kind."

For a moment the two great beasts were silent, gently caressing each other with their trunks. Then Mahmoud spoke:

"Had I reflected, O Joy of my Heart, I could have saved thee all thy apprehensions. But it was not until they had released thee that I remembered. Look thou, Duchess, at the under side of my trunk and tell me what thou seest there."

Mahmoud raised his trunk in the air, and his mate inspected it carefully, feeling its under side from lip to tip. Presently she said, with surprise and some reproach in her tones:

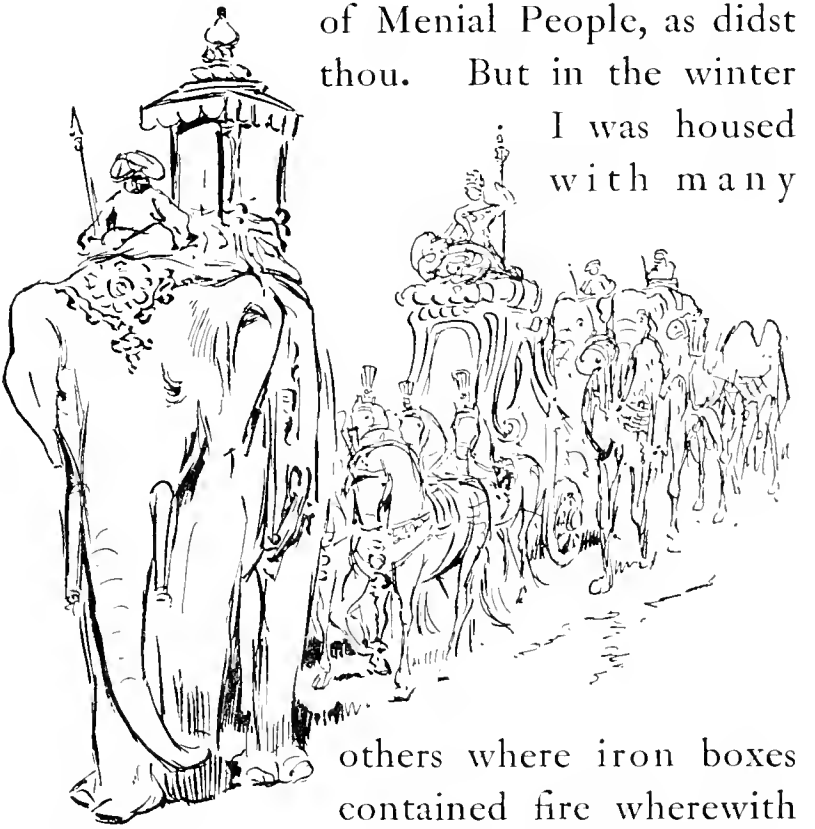
"Why hast thou concealed thy wounds from me, thy faithful mate, my Lord?

Almost from lip to tip thou art scarred as though by lion's claws. Surely this is since we came from the Jungle? Then, when I was young and my eyes keen, thou couldst not have concealed from me these dreadful wounds."

"Calm thyself, O Light of my Life," said Mahmoud, soothingly. "Canst thou remember the time long before we came to this pleasant place, when, for many weary months, we were separated, my beloved?"

"Aye, well, my Lord. It was the time when, day after day, I marched at the head of a long train of gaudily painted wagons in which were Menial People of every sort, stopping now and then at towns and villages for the pleasure of the Master People, who came by thousands to see us. And where wert thou, my Lord, during that dreary time of our separation?"

"In the summer," said Mahmoud, "I roamed the country at the head of a train of Menial People, as didst thou. But in the winter I was housed with many



others where iron boxes contained fire wherewith to warm us. It is to this same fire that I owe these wounds."

"I, too, have seen this red danger," said Duchess, with a shudder. "Once, in the Jungle, it roared and pursued me among the dried reeds till my sides were scorched and I was near dying of fatigue. Didst thou say, my Lord, that the Master People imprison those scorching red tongues in iron boxes?"

"Aye, thus it warms, but pursueth not," answered Mahmoud. "Yet is there sometimes danger, as I am about to relate. It happened one night in the middle of winter, when the cold was so severe that the man who watched stretched himself out on the floor at the very side of the iron box, which was as red without as it was within, that old Sultan, the lion, escaped from his cage, and

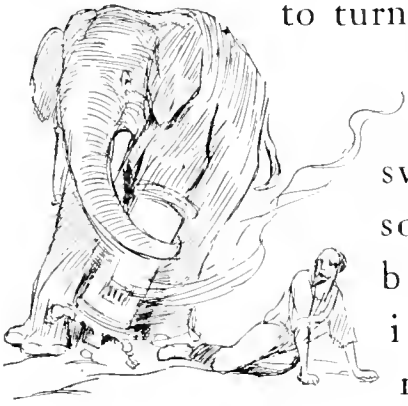
walked abroad within the large house. In passing the red box, he lashed his tail thereon and was stung by the fire so that he howled. But ere the watcher could rise, Sultan, roaring with anger, leaped on the red box, overturning it, so that it fell and held fast the foot of the man that watched. Instantly did the man set up a great outery, for the fire stung him also, and the weight of the red box held him so that he could not rise.

"Now it happened," continued Mahmoud, "that the man who watched had shown me many kindnesses, and I was loath to see him suffer pain. Therefore, breaking the chain that held me in my stall, I ran to the iron box, wrapped my trunk about it and quickly set it on its legs, as, many times in the Jungle, I have carried the hewn logs for the Master People. It

was not until the watcher was released and arose, limping, to his feet in safety, that I felt the sting of the fire—"

"Remarkable! Most remarkable!"

This interruption, uttered in a gruff, unfamiliar voice, caused the little Limping Boy to turn and look to see who was the speaker. But he saw only the swaying branches of some shrubbery near by, and so went on interpreting Mahmoud's tale.



"The pain grew each moment more severe, so that I groaned with the agony of it," continued the elephant. "The man who watched returned me to my stall and put oil on my wounds. The oil availed little. For days my agony continued. The

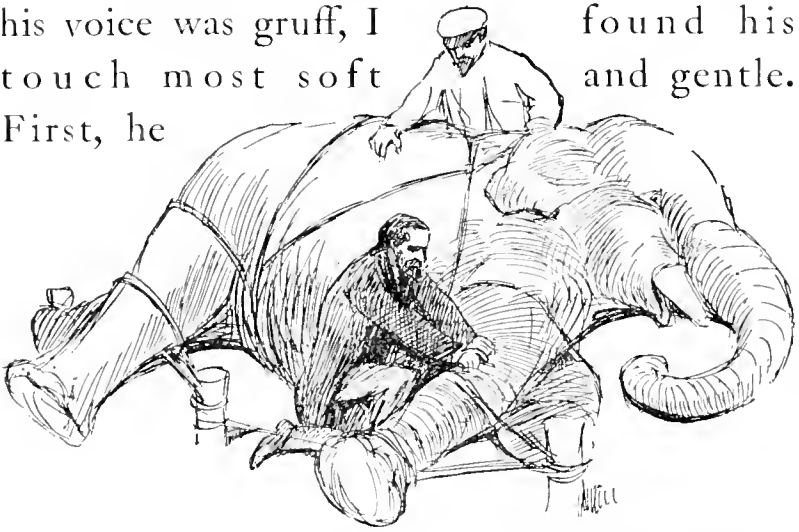
Keeper and his helpers could give me no relief. Great patches of skin fell from my trunk, leaving my wounds raw and bleeding. Thus I suffered in the full belief that my wounds were mortal, and that I should never see thee again, my beloved, when one day the Keeper brought to my stall a large man with yellow hair and beard, who carried in his hand a black bag, and who, as he examined my wounded trunk, kept saying 'hum' and 'ha' in a gruff voice. Yet I felt in my heart that he desired to afford me relief—"

"Remarkable! Most remarkable!"

It was the same gruff voice; but again the little Limping Boy was unable to discover whence it came, and so gave his attention once more to the elephant.

"Therefore, when men came with ropes," said Mahmoud, "I made no resistance, but

lay down of my own accord and suffered them to bind me. Thereupon the gruff man opened his black bag and took therefrom sundry bright knives and needles; also some bottles and strips of gauze. Though his voice was gruff, I found his touch most soft and gentle. First, he



bathed my wounds with some sweet-smelling stuff, and then, with a keen knife—so keen was it that I knew not when it touched me, though it brought streams of blood—the man pared away the diseased skin. I

confess that the gruff man's next act puzzled me somewhat at first. While his helpers held my trunk out straight, ever and anon bathing it with a soothing liquid, he washed with great care the thin, tender skin under my forelegs. A sharp pain, at which I made no outcry, however, in the same region, caused me to turn my eyes in that direction. The gruff man, with another very sharp knife, was taking from my legs narrow strips of the living skin and laying them, one after another, on the raw flesh of my trunk. Ere long the wounds were all covered, and when strips of cloth had been bound about them, holding them fast, the ropes were taken from me, and I was permitted to rise. From that day all my pain ceased, and soon only the scars which thou hast seen, O Light of my Life, remained as a witness of the merciful deed of the gruff

man with the yellow hair and beard."

"Remarkable! Most remarkable!"

This time when the little Limping Boy turned at the interruption, he saw the Princess coming from the shrubbery, eagerly dragging after her by the hand a large man in whose yellow hair and beard there were some streaks of gray.

"Oh, Toots!" called out the Princess, as they approached the door of the Elephant House, "here's papa. We heard your translation of Mahmoud's story, and it's wonderful. I told papa you could do it, but he wouldn't believe it till his own ears convinced him."

"And so you're Toots," said the Princess' father. "My little daughter says that you translate the talk of the animals. Hum, ha, where did you get that story about the elephant skin-grafting you've just been telling?"

"Why, papa," said the Princess, reproachfully, "he got it from Mahmoud."

"Hum, ha," grunted the large man to himself, "the boy got it from the Keeper—probably the same one that took me out to Bridgeport for that case in Barnum's menagerie. Hum, ha, let's see, that was six years ago last winter. Hum, ha." And the large man looked sharply at Toots.

"My little daughter calls you 'Toots'; what's your real name?"

"Edward Vine, sir."

"Hum, ha, poetical; goes well with his powerful imagination. What does your father do?"

"My father is dead, sir."

"Poor boy! Hum, ha. What does your mother do?"

"Makes embroidery, sir."

"Any brothers or sisters?"

"No, sir."

"How old are you?"

"Eleven last June, sir."

"Hum, ha," said the gruff man.

Toots now saw that when the Princess' father said "hum, ha," he was talking to himself. He stood with his back against the rail in front of Mahmoud's stall. The old elephant was acting strangely. At every exclamation of "hum, ha," he would flap his ears and move a step nearer the large man.

"Hum, ha," mused the large man gruffly, again, as he took off his hat to wipe the perspiration from his brow, over which swept the grayish yellow locks. Instantly Mahmoud gave one of his little squeals of delight and began fondling the large man with the tip of his trunk.

"Why, he remembers you, sir," said Toots.

"Or else he mistakes you for the surgeon who mended his trunk."

"Hum, ha, he doesn't mistake me, boy. I am the surgeon who mended his trunk. I flatter myself that it was the first case of elephant skin-grafting ever attempted. Hum, ha." And having closely inspected the scars on the old elephant's proboscis, the large man said "hum, ha," several more times, evidently with great satisfaction, then said to Toots:

"What's the matter with your leg?"

"It's too short, sir."

"Born so?"

"Oh, no, sir. It was broken below the knee when I was six years old, and my mother was too poor to get a good surgeon."

"Hum, ha; let's have a look at it."

The surgeon, whose hands were large, white and soft, and as gentle as his voice

was gruff, unfastened the straps of iron and felt of Toots' poor, crippled leg, saying "hum, ha," a great many times as he did so. At length he replaced the irons, looked the boy sharply in the face, and asked:

"How would you like to wear it like the other one, for a change?"

"Oh, would that be possible, sir?" asked Toots, turning pale.

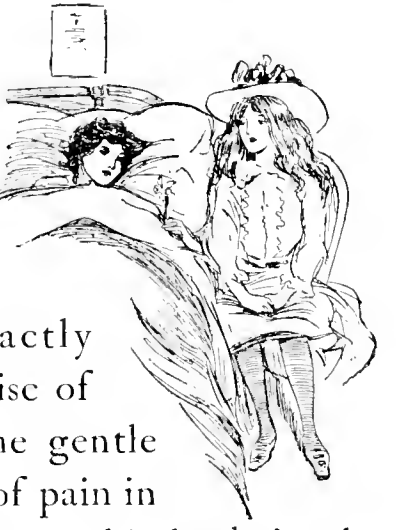
"Easy as"—the gruff man looked around to see if he could find anything so easy as making Toots' leg an inch and a half longer, and noticed Mahmoud—"easy as growing new skin on an elephant's trunk. Hum, ha, easier."

"Would it hurt?"

"Not a bit. Do it while you're asleep. Then you lie on your back a couple of weeks, after which you go out on my farm with my little daughter and stay till

you can jump up and crack your heels together twice. Hum, ha. Tell your mother to bring you to the hospital at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon."

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" was all Toots could say.



"Hum, ha, any friend of Mahmoud is a friend of mine," said the Princess' father.

It all happened exactly according to the promise of the gruff man with the gentle hands—a little dream of pain in his leg, then two weeks on his back in the hospital bed, where the Princess visited him daily with all sorts of dainties, and then, when he could walk about a bit, a long journey into the country.

There, in the bright sunshine, with the birds and butterflies glancing all about him, and the woods and fields calling to him to explore them, he grew strong once more, until, little by little, he learned to get along so gloriously that he could hardly make himself believe that he was the same boy at all. And for this great blessing, which in all his life he had never dared hope for, Toots felt from the very bottom of his heart that he was indebted to the friendship and intimacy which he had come to have with old Mahmoud.

CHAPTER V

Said the fat white grub to the new spoon hook,
With a cynical smile and a scornful look:
"Pray accept my very best wishes.
It is true you dazzle their eyes, I suppose,
But the fact remains, as every one knows,
That I am the food for fishes."
—*Lay of the Minstrel Pike.*

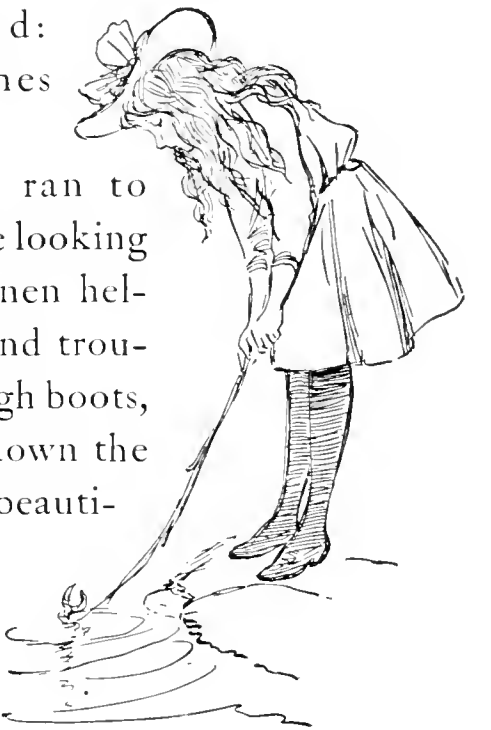
FOOTS sat on the smooth top of a boulder on the river bank, gazing deep down into the pool at his feet. The pool was shaded by the overhanging branches of a cottonwood tree. The warm air was filled with the fragrance of the country. It had painted the boy's cheeks a healthy brown, and caused him to thrill with a sense of strength that was new and delightful. The good

surgeon's promise was fulfilled; Toots' leg was now as straight as that of any boy, and no longer was it burdened by the weight of iron straps. Concerning the iron straps he had just one regret; when he returned to his friends, the Menial People, would Mahmoud be able to recognize him, thus bereft of those symbols of their affinity? He would soon know, for he and the Princess—whose guest Toots was at her father's country home during the period of his convalescence—were to return in a few days.

Near where Toots sat, the Princess played beside a little brook that gurgled over its bed of cobble-stones. She was amusing herself poking the end of a stick under the stones in the bed of the brook. Occasionally a crawfish would dart out backward, glare at her savagely with its beady eyes and snap its clumsy claws at the stick, whereupon

the Princess would utter a ladylike little shriek and retire to another part of the brook. Suddenly she clapped her hands and exclaimed:

"Oh, here comes Reginald!"



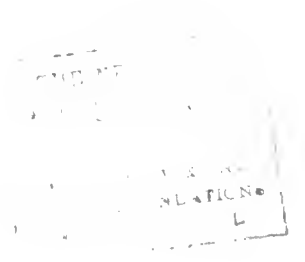
The Princess ran to meet a trim, precise looking young man in a linen helmet, canvas coat and trousers and a pair of high boots, who was coming down the steep bank with a beautiful new rod and reel on his shoulder. Slung across the other shoulder was a large bag. This was to put his fish in—when he had caught them. Toots never moved from his seat on the boulder.

"Now, if you children will keep quiet," said Reginald, as he fastened a brilliant contrivance of scarlet feathers and glittering silver on the end of his slender silken line, "we shall have fried pike for supper."

"I'd rather have pickerel, if you please," said Toots.

"Pickerel never bite at this time of day," answered Reginald, with authority. He stepped to the water's edge, where the brook entered the river, and raised his rod. Swish! went the delicate bit of bamboo through the air, the reel whizzed and the silken line shot far down the stream. When the glittering bauble at its end struck the water, Reginald wound up the reel slowly, anxiously watching the tip of the rod. Toots and the Princess looked on in silence, the Princess because of her admiration for the natty figure, and Toots out of politeness. But the

Suddenly the Princess exclaimed: "Oh, here comes Reginald!"



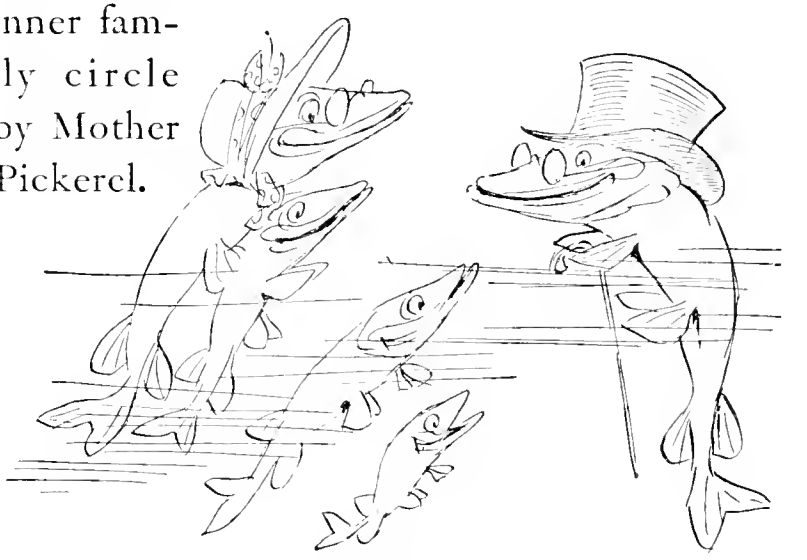
boy had small respect for Reginald's abilities as a fisherman. Farmer John, with his crooked old pole and grubs for bait, was Toots' ideal in the fishing line. Besides, John had told him about the Pickerel Family whose home was in this same pool.

Yes, John's story must be quite true, for now as he turned his gaze from the unprofitable fisherman back to the pool, Toots was sure he could see shadowy figures floating in and out among the rocks. Certainly there was Grandfather Pickerel, the patriarch of the family. Toots could see him now quite plainly. He was having a domestic discussion with two other pickerel who bore a strong family resemblance to him.

"They must be Father and Mother Pickerel," thought Toots.

Darting about near by, Toots could see the whole brood of young pickerels. They were of all sizes, from Big Brother Pickerel, who was nearly as large as his father, down to Baby Pickerel, who was hardly larger than a minnow. Suddenly Toots realized that something of unusual importance was going on at the bottom of the pool, for as his eyes grew more accustomed to the wavering lights and shadows in the water, he could see, swimming about in the near neighborhood of the Pickerel Family, a whole troop of collateral relations. He recognized Uncle Pike by his fierce look and by the way he ordered the other relations about. Toots knew Aunt Bass by her plump figure and the bright silver suit she wore. She was swimming here and there, conversing amiably with everybody. Miss Catfish, a distant and poor relation, was lingering

modestly in the background. Nobody seemed to be paying any attention to her except Big Brother Pickerel, who kept edging over in her direction, only to be pursued, reprimanded and driven back to the inner family circle by Mother Pickerel.



Toots felt that revelations of the utmost significance were impending. He hardly dared to breathe. Just then his observations were interrupted by the shrill voice of the

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Princess: "Toots! Toots! John's coming!"

This was different. Toots scrambled down from the boulder and ran to meet the big man with the tattered straw hat who was approaching with his crooked fish-pole on his shoulder. In one hand John carried a rusty oyster can which appeared to be full of dirt. Toots stuck his fingers into the dirt and brought something white to the surface.

"They're grubs," he exclaimed delightedly. "Now we *shall* have fried pickerel for supper."

Reginald was reeling in his line. His face wore a look of discontent.

"Don't seem to have much appetite for red feathers to-day, do they?" said John, as he stuck a grub on his hook and dropped it into the pool.

Reginald muttered something between his

teeth, and walked toward the rock where the Princess was standing. She gave him a look of consolation. Toots was clambering up beside her. It was a good place from which to watch John.

"Go away," said the Princess, drawing her short skirts about her. "Go away; you smell of grubs."

But she held out her hand to Reginald and smiled on him in her most fascinating manner. Toots went and stood by the side of John. At that moment the big man gave a sharp tug at the crooked pole, and a shining pickerel over a foot long lay flopping on the stones. Toots viewed the fish at close range with bulging eyes, and said:

"Why, I know him. It's the father of the little pickerels."

"That so?" said John, sticking another grub on his hook and dropping it into the

pool again. "Well, we'll eat him fried for supper just the same."

Toots' lip quivered. "Where will the little pickerels get another father?" he asked.

"They don't need any," said John. "Grandfather Pickerel will look after them. He's a wise old chap. Nobody's going to get a chance to fry him in a hurry. I've hooked him half a dozen times, but I've never had a chance to fry him yet."

"Did he get away?" asked Toots.

"Well, I should say he did. You never see more than the tip of the old sinner's nose. When he's given you a glimpse of that, he bites off the line and flops back into his hole."

Toots reflected for several moments, and then inquired: "What becomes of the hook, John?"

"Oh, he swallows the hook," answered the

big man, testily. "His stomach must be half full of old iron by this time."

This was an interesting situation. Toots turned it over in his mind slowly. Presently his attention was diverted by an exclamation from John.

"Durn his skin!" the big man was saying. "Blest if I don't believe I've got him again!"

John's line was being dragged frantically about in the pool. The pole bent and splashed in the water. The big man's hat came off. Reginald and the Princess interrupted their flirtation to join Toots beside the pool.

"Out of the way, you folks!" shouted John. "Give me room. I'm going to land the old sinner this time, or know the reason why."

All at once the crooked pole snapped in two, and John fell backward with his

heels in the air. The next instant he had dashed into the pool up to his shoulders, and seized the small end of the pole, to which the line was attached.

"Reel him in, why don't you?" sang out Reginald, laughing.

"Reel nothing," said John, wrathfully, from the middle of the pool. "The only way to get this fish out is to jump on his back and ride him out."

John concluded to compromise by leading him out. He had wound several yards of the line about his arm, and was wading toward the shore. The fish was suspiciously quiet. The big man stepped out of the water and drew in the line,

hand over hand. Toots could see the dim outlines of the fish as he allowed himself to be drawn toward the water's edge. Suddenly he clapped his hands and cried out gleefully:

"I know him! I know him! It's Grandfather Pickerel."

"So do I know him," said John. "Just you wait till I get my hands on him."

At length Grandfather Pickerel's long, sharp nose appeared above the water. The big man stepped back ready for one long, strong pull at the right instant. The wary old fish opened his lean jaws to their full width, and brought them together with a vicious snap. It was at exactly the right moment. Once more John lay on his back with his heels in the air, while Grandfather Pickerel glided with much dignity into the depths of the pool.

"Now, if you had had my rod and reel," said Reginald, "you could have—"

"Your rod and reel be durned," said John, as he picked up the fish lying on the stones, and started up the bank with it. "If ever that old sinner gets hold of your rod and reel, he'll make toothpicks of 'em."

CHAPTER VI

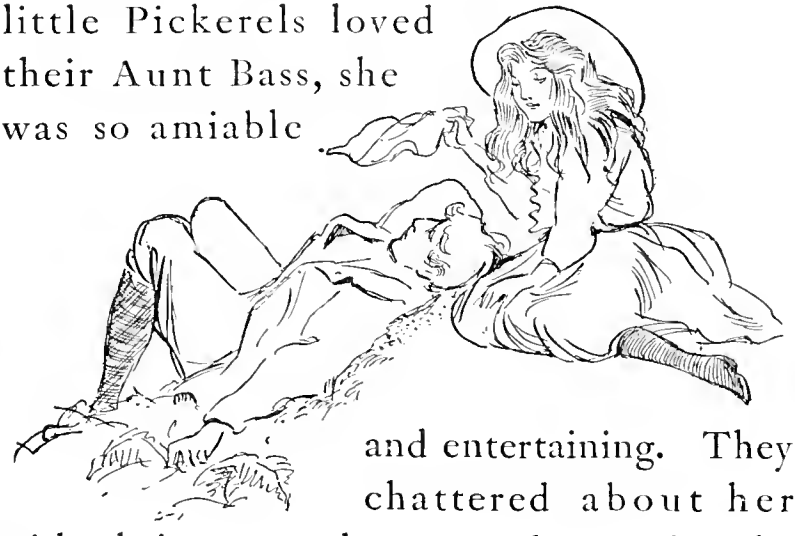
Food never drops out of a clear sky. When the sky is dark with clouds, it sometimes rains toads; that is different. I have yet to hear of a barbed iron hook being concealed in the flesh of a toad. Insects and other morsels that float down the brook into the pool come to us in the regular course of nature, and may be swallowed without question.

—*Maxims of Grandfather Pickerel.*

TOOTS went back to the boulder by the river's margin that same afternoon, and resumed his observation of the Pickerel Family at home. Reginald was taking a nap on the grassy slope of the river bank, and the Princess was tenderly waving her handkerchief over his face to keep off the flies. On a rainy day not long afterward Toots gave her the following account of his observations:

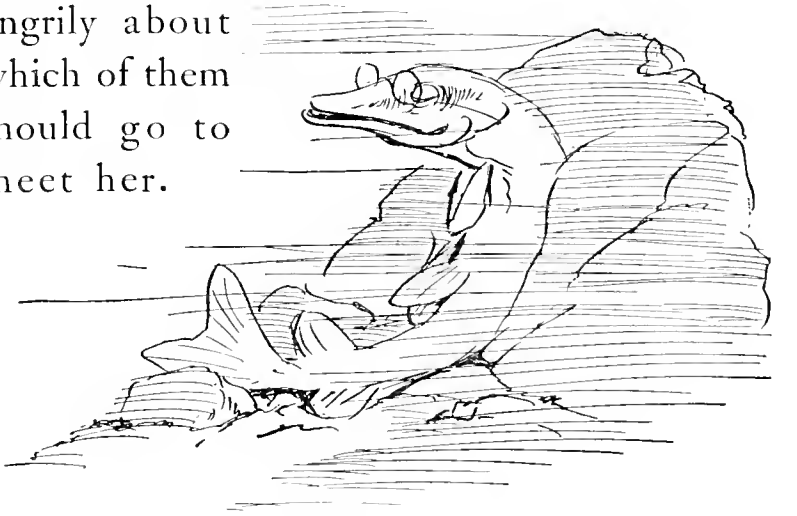
Mother Pickerel was worried. She expected company, and everything was at sixes

and sevens. The little pickerels were quarrelsome, and were constantly getting in her way. She cuffed them with her fins, and asked them what they supposed their Aunt Bass would think of their conduct. The little Pickerels loved their Aunt Bass, she was so amiable



and entertaining. They chattered about her with their noses close together under the rocks where the brook entered the pool. Aunt Bass was not fierce and greedy like Uncle Pike. Sometimes she came over to the pool at sundown, and amused them by

leaping far out of the water to catch fireflies. And she would tell them such lovely stories of all she saw in the strange upper world, where there was nothing to swim in. She was delightful. The little pickerels disputed angrily about which of them should go to meet her.



They chased each other about and blundered rudely into the corner where Grandfather Pickerel was trying to have a quiet nap. The old fellow grumbled so loudly at this interruption that Mother Pickerel

had to leave her work again. She cuffed them right and left, saying:

"How often have I told you not to disturb your grandfather when he is taking his nap? And his stomach troubling him so! Don't you know it rained last night? Oh, you bad children, to worry your grandfather after a rain when his stomach hurts him so."

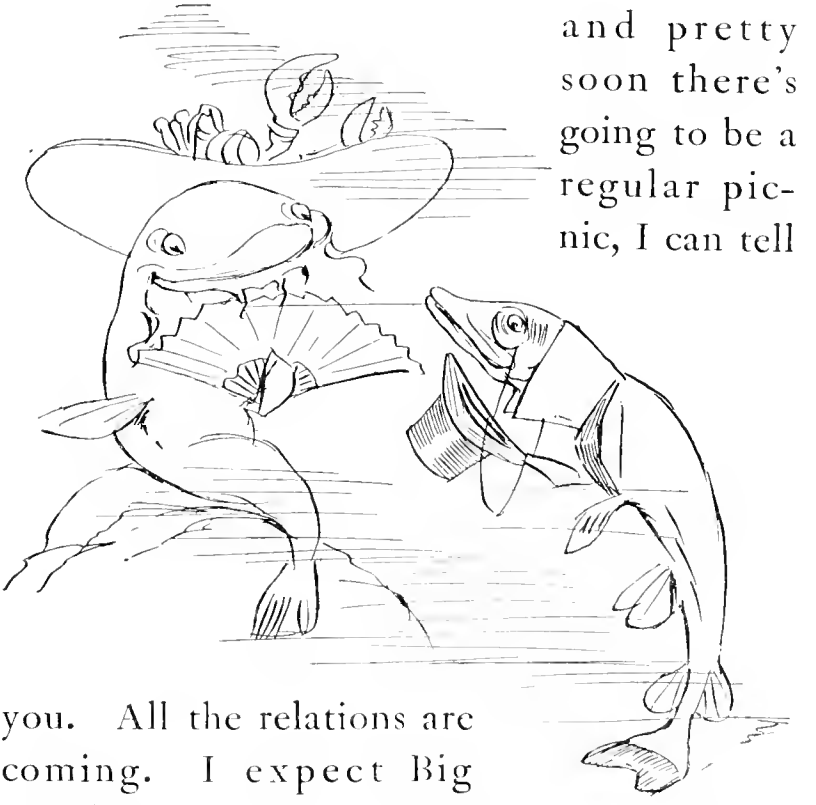
Just then Father Pickerel came home. Hearing what had happened, he went at once and apologized to Grandfather Pickerel. Presently Mother Pickerel joined them. Baby Pickerel sneaked up near enough to hear what they were saying. After a little she rejoined her brothers and sisters, looking very important.

"What are they talking about?" demanded the other little pickerels, in a chorus.

"About Big Brother," said Baby Pickerel. "I just knew that was what was the matter.

TWO IN A ZOO

He's been gallivanting again after that ill-bred Miss Catfish. He can't be found anywhere. Uncle Pike's gone after him, and pretty soon there's going to be a regular picnic, I can tell you. All the relations are coming. I expect Big Brother's going to catch it this time."



Miss Pickerel turned up her nose

disdainfully. "The idea of Brother running after that Catfish girl. What shocking bad taste! Did you notice what a horrid big mouth she has?"

"And she hasn't got a decent suit of scales to her back," chimed in the next to the youngest Pickerel.

"She actually eats mud," said Baby Pickerel. "I saw her do it only the other day. When she noticed that I saw her, she looked ashamed and sneaked away."

"I am very glad to hear that she is not lost to all sense of shame," said Miss Pickerel, with a toss of her head.

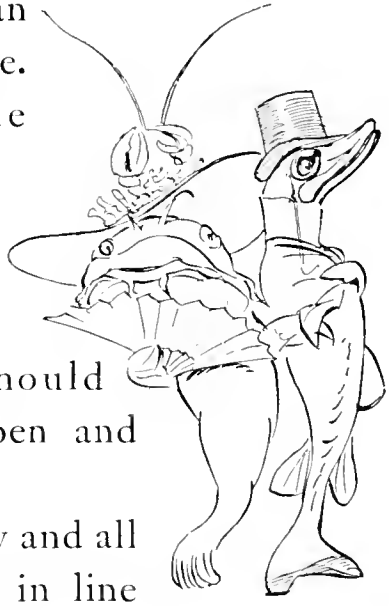
"For my part," said one of the little Pickerels who had not yet spoken, "I'd about as lief be a low-bred catfish as a greedy, quarrelsome pike."

"S-s-s-h!" said Miss Pickerel, warningly, "the Pikes are our relations."

"I don't care if they are. Uncle Pike is perfectly disgraceful. He snatches the fattest tadpoles and gulps them down at a single mouthful before any one else has a chance at them. He has the most enormous appetite. It's unnatural, too, I'm sure. Yesterday I saw him sneaking about after Baby. Do you know, I have an idea he could tell what became of little Cousin Bass last summer. It made me shudder to see him watching Baby with his big, greedy eyes. I went and told Grandfather, and they had some warm words about it."

As they listened to this gruesome tale, the other little pickerels turned pale and were silent. They did not recover their accustomed spirits until Aunt Bass bustled in among them, giving each a pat with her gentle fin. She was

closely followed by Uncle Pike, who was driving before him Big Brother Pickerel and Miss Catfish. Big Brother Pickerel kept a protecting fin spread above Miss Catfish, and his bold features bore an expression of defiance. Miss Catfish was pale and trembling.



"If I were in her place," whispered Miss Pickerel to her brothers and sisters, "I should want the earth to open and swallow me up!"

The Pickerel Family and all the relations drew up in line and looked with severity at Big Brother Pickerel, who continued his protecting attitude toward Miss Catfish. At length Grandfather Pickerel spoke.

"Grandson," said he, "it is more in sorrow than in anger that we are gathered here. Speak. Do you insist on bringing that young person into this respectable family?"

"I do," answered Big Brother Pickerel, firmly; "and as for the respectability of the family, I don't—"

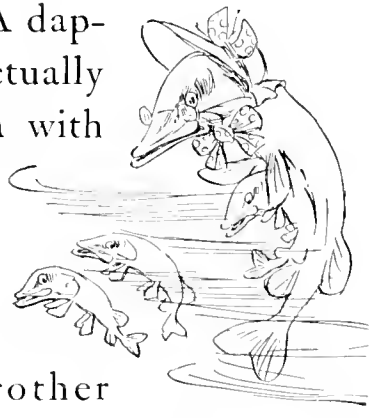
"That will do, sir!" thundered Grandfather Pickerel, in a terrible voice. "So be it. Miss Catfish, consider yourself raised to our level. Your apartment is under the seventeenth cobble-stone to the left of where the brook enters the pool. Spare your protestations of gratitude, I beg of you. *Our* feelings are too deep for words."

At this instant the proceedings were interrupted by a dazzling object that dropped into the water a short distance down the stream, and came glinting and whirling through the pool. Big Brother Pickerel

made a dash for it, but Grandfather Pickerel hit him such a slap with the flat of his tail that he fell back, dazed, to the bottom of the pool.

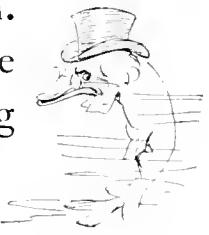
"Idiot! Look up and see what you were jumping at."

When the others looked in the direction indicated by Grandfather Pickerel, they saw a most amusing thing. A dapper young man was actually trying to deceive them with some scarlet feathers and a silver bangle at the end of a line. Even Baby Pickerel knew better. Big Brother Pickerel looked very much ashamed. He tried to explain that his nervousness over domestic matters had temporarily warped his judgment.



TWO IN A ZOO

Grandfather Pickerel rose cautiously toward the surface of the pool to see whether any more formidable enemy was in sight. He saw Toots sitting on the boulder, but there was nothing to cause alarm in that. On the contrary, Grandfather Pickerel regarded Toots in the light of a friend and sympathizer. He had only one reason to be at all doubtful concerning him. He sometimes came down to the pool with the terribly fascinating big man in the tattered straw hat. Grandfather Pickerel felt a dyspeptic twinge in the pit of his stomach as he recalled his experiences with the big man. As he sank back into the pool, the other pickerels noticed that he appeared grave and preoccupied. This meant that the head of the family was turning something over in his mind that he would shortly



communicate to them. So they approached in a respectful semicircle, and waited expectantly. Grandfather Pickerel cast his eye over his audience, and asked:

"Where is my son?"

"Father has gone to see Aunt Bass home," answered Mother Pickerel; "he will return in a few minutes."

Grandfather Pickerel cleared his throat, and looking severely at Big Brother Pickerel, said:

"I must again warn you of the necessity of using care and judgment in the selection of your food. I will pass over the humiliating scene we have just witnessed, simply reminding you that dazzling objects which seem to drop out of the sky should never be construed as food. My youngest grandchild would be ashamed to act as you have done, sir!"

Big Brother Pickerel hung his head, while Baby Pickerel swelled with pride to twice her natural size. At this instant the brilliant combination of scarlet and silver again came whirling through the water above their heads. The whole Pickerel family gazed at it without the slightest evidence of emotion, whereat Grandfather Pickerel gave them a benignant smile, and continued:

"As a general rule, everything that drops into the pool is to be regarded with suspicion. Food never drops out of a clear sky. When the sky is dark with clouds it sometimes rains toads; that is different. I have yet to hear of a barbed iron hook being found concealed in the flesh of a toad. Insects and other morsels that float down the brook into the pool come to us in the regular course of nature, and may be swallowed without question."

Here Grandfather Pickerel stopped and reflected for a moment. Presently he added:

"Regarding objects that seem to drop out of the sky, I think of one exception—grasshoppers"—the little pickerels smacked their lips at mention of this delectable morsel—"which may either fly into the pool from a distance or leap in from the bank.

"I now come," said the patriarch, "to the most deadly danger with which we have to deal. I refer to the powerful fascination which seems to be exercised over us by those big two-legged creatures in tattered straw hats, carrying long, crooked poles over their shoulders, who come down to the pool and lure us to destruction with grubs impaled on sharp iron hooks. I don't know how to account for it," said Grandfather Pickerel, shaking his head and turning pale about the gills, "except on the theory of hypnotism—"

"Oh, here comes papa!" interrupted Baby Pickerel.

But the others were gazing in consternation at the patriarch, who was now white clear to the tip of his tail and shaking with terror. He was staring upward with wild, distended eyes. The others looked also and understood. The big man was there with his crooked pole. They felt themselves drawn toward him. He was throwing something into the pool.

"Back! Back!" shouted Grandfather Pickerel. "Back for your lives!" But the warning was too late. Father Pickerel, approaching from the middle of the river, jumped at the white grub, and all was over. The bereaved Pickerel family saw him dangling helplessly at the end of the big man's line, then disappearing into the unknown world where there is nothing to swim in.

"Back under the rocks, all of you!" thundered Grandfather Pickerel. "There is only one thing to be done. I must have that hook, or soon there'll be none left to tell the tale. Thank heaven, I have two sound teeth in my head yet."

With bated breath and quivering fins

the other pickerels peered out from under the rocks at the desperate struggle which immediately ensued. It was short, but decisive. The waters of the pool were lashed into foam. The little pickerels were half-mad with terror. All at once they gave

a loud cheer. The victorious patriarch was returning. There was bloody foam on his jaws, but several inches of fish-line hung from between them. The aged hero paid no attention to the cheering, but swam dejectedly into the farthest corner of his den. Mother Pickerel followed him in silence. When she returned, her eyes were red.

"Didn't Grandfather get the hook after all?" asked Baby Pickerel.

"Hush, dear," said Mother Pickerel, wiping her eyes with the tip of her tail. "Yes, your grandfather has the hook safe in the pit of his stomach along with all the others, and it is paining him dreadfully."

The Princess was still fanning the flies away from the face of Reginald. John was cultivating corn on the high bank of the river. Every five or six minutes he turned his team near by from one row into the next one.

Toots remembered John's extra pole and line concealed behind the old cottonwood. He went and got it. But how about bait? Then Toots had a second inspiration. He recalled Grandfather Pickerel's remark about grasshoppers. There were plenty of them all about. At that instant a fat one dropped out of the tree and lay with its long legs on the rocks at Toots' feet. The boy, as tenderly as possible, stuck it on the hook and went back to the boulder. First, he would see what was going on in the bosom of the Pickerel Family.

Mother Pickerel was asking Grandfather Pickerel if he didn't think he'd better take a bite of something to stay his stomach till dinner-time.

"There's some nice tender tadpoles over in the mouth of the brook," she said. "Do try half a dozen raw, dearie, won't you?"

It was at that very instant that Toots' grasshopper, with the hook through the small of his back, jumped out of his hands into the pool. Before the boy had time to realize what had happened, the line and then the pole began moving of their own accord toward the water's edge. Toots grabbed the pole and was nearly dragged into the pool. He looked around and saw John turning his team on the high bank.

"I've got him, John! Come here quick!" yelled Toots.

Reginald awoke barely in time to seize the end of the pole before it and Toots had been dragged into the water. John came tearing down the bank, shouting at the top of his voice:

"Don't fight him yet. Give him the line! Give him the line!"

"He's got the line," said Reginald, "and

he seems to want the pole, too. Now is the time when fifty yards of silk and a good reel—"

"Here, give me the pole," said John; "we'll see who's master this time."

Then followed a most exciting scene. When at last Grandfather Pickerel's nose appeared above the surface of the pool, John hadn't a dry rag to his back. The big man was amazed to see that the old pickerel made no attempt to bite off the line. When he had him safely landed, the first thing he did was to look in his mouth.

"Well, I'm durned," said John. "The old sinner hasn't a tooth left in his head."

As Toots gazed on the form of the vanquished patriarch, all his pride of conquest was swallowed up in a great wave of pity.

"He'll never swallow any more fish-hooks, will he, John?"

"Well, I guess not," said the big man; "the frying pan will stop all that nonsense."

"It seems a pity to fry the old chap," said Toots. "He's lost all his teeth and can't do any more damage."

"That's so," answered John, good naturedly; "maybe you'd rather put him in the spring, and keep him for a pet?"

But Toots was thinking of the grief of the Pickerel Family. How would Mother Pickerel be able to get along with both Father and Grandfather Pickerel no more, especially considering the doubtful character of Big Brother Pickerel, with his tendency to overturn the established order of society? When he had thought it all over, he said:

"No, John, I'd rather put him back in the pool, where he can continue to care for the little Pickerels."

And thus the patriarch of the Pickerel Family, wiser than any of his race, before or since, was restored to those who had such grave need of his guidance.

CHAPTER VII

THE country of the Menial People lay white and frozen under its blanket of snow when Toots and the Princess next visited it. They stood before the cage of the lion cubs on the morning of the first snowfall of the year.

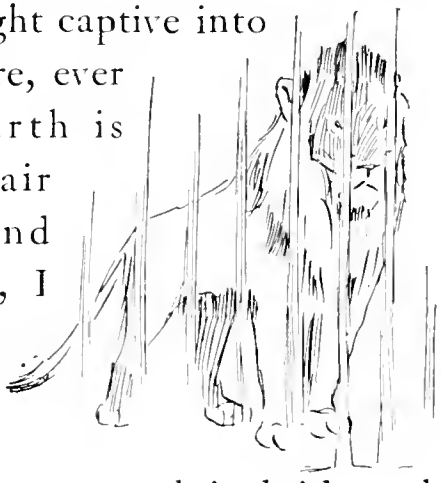
"By my claws and teeth, all the earth is white!" exclaimed the largest of the cubs, as he looked through his barred window.

"The world must be coming to an end," said a shivering puma, curling up in the farthest corner of his cage.

"Ho, there, Sultan!" cried out one of the young tigers; "you are old and full of wisdom, tell us why all the land is white, and why our teeth chatter so."

Old Sultan rose thereupon, and having walked majestically to the front of his dwelling, lifted up his voice and said:

"It is well that you children should know that we are no longer in the Jungle of our fathers. For some reason, I know not what, we have been brought captive into the far North, where, ever and anon, the earth is white, and our hair stands out stiff and harsh. However, I would counsel you to be patient and calm. The food is wholesome and plenty, and is laid each day conveniently at our very feet."



"That is indeed so," assented the mother lioness. "It is a great burden off my mind to know that though my claws grow dull

with age, and my limbs too stiff to leap, you children are still unpursued by the phantom of hunger unappeased. Therefore, let us be thankful." And she stretched herself out on the floor of her house, and was soon snoring comfortably.

The wise counsel of the older lions calmed the cubs somewhat, but filled them with so much curiosity about the jungle home of their people that throughout the day they kept those who had been born in freedom busy answering their questions. Thus it happened that neither Pwit-Pwit, the sparrow, nor the little Limping Boy—who no longer limped—could get the attention of Mahmoud or Duchess, mate of the aged elephant, till toward evening.

In the deepest snow of his yard stood Wapiti, the red deer, with his head aloft, his great branching antlers thrown back and

his nostrils quivering. Pwit-Pwit flew up and alighted on one of the prongs and chirped merrily into the deer's ear:

"Glorious fun, this snow, isn't it, old fellow?"

But Wapiti stood sniffing the frosty air and was silent.

"I know what is the matter with you," said the sparrow, "you are trying to remember something that happened when it was winter in the great woods where you ran free."

Pwit-Pwit picked at the shreds of skin hanging from Wapiti's antlers, and at length the deer lowered his head and spoke:

"Go away now," he said, "but come back again. I smell something in the air that makes me feel like leaping and running with all my speed. The memory of other days is struggling to return. Just now I

thought it was here. Come back after a little, Pwit-Pwit. Give me time to collect my thoughts."

With this the sparrow hopped down from the deer's antlers at Toots' feet, and began fluttering his wings and scolding at him.

"He is talking to you now," said the Princess. "What does he say?"

"He wants us to come with him. Lead the way," said Toots to the sparrow, "and we will follow wherever you go."

Toots took the Princess' hand and started a few steps, whereat Pwit-Pwit, with a chirp of satisfaction, flew straight to the den of the bears. When Toots and the Princess arrived, they found the sparrow exhibiting signs of disappointment and indignation. The great beasts were curled up fast asleep and snoring.

"Well, what do you think of that?"

demanded the sparrow. "A nice way to receive visitors, that is. They know that I always come when the sun shines full in their doorway."

"The snow and the cold have made them sleepy," said Toots.

"Perhaps that is so," answered the sparrow—Toots was translating their talk for the Princess—"but it is stupid of them, and impolite, and I won't have it."

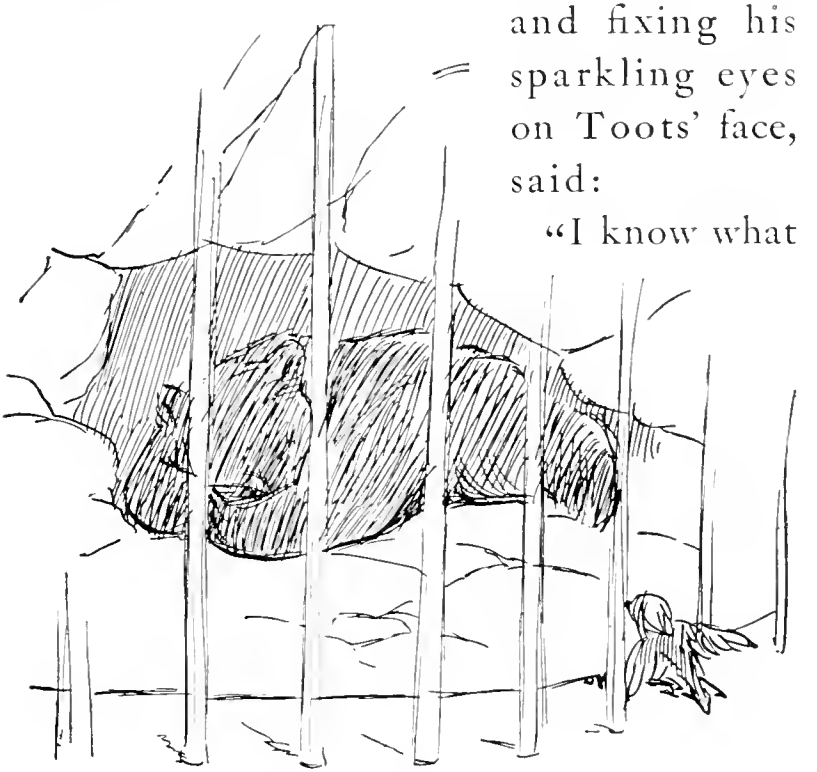
With these words the sparrow flew at the eyes of the oldest bear, pecking away with all his might, and chirping:

"Come, now, will you wake up? You have company for breakfast. Shame upon you!"

But the old bear simply put his great paws over his eyes and was presently snoring louder than ever. It was the same with the younger bears. They had eaten their

breakfast, and were determined to sleep.

Pwit-Pwit fluttered out of the bears' den, and fixing his sparkling eyes on Toots' face, said:



"I know what we'll do. We'll call on the racoons. They're horrible little chatterboxes, but they are inclined to be sociable. Besides,

I have been neglecting them of late."

So they went a little farther up the hill to the Racoon House, with its door looking toward the sun, which is always closed at night. No sound came from within.

"It is a little late to catch them at breakfast," said the sparrow; "but they are such greedy people that some of them are sure to be quarreling over the last morsel."

But, to the intense surprise of Pwit-Pwit, all was silent within the Racoon House. He hopped in at the door, and presently returned, looking deeply disgusted.

"Would you believe it?" he said testily. "Every one of those silly people is snoring louder than the bears. Isn't it disgraceful?"

"They are like the bears," said Toots; "the cold makes them drowsy."

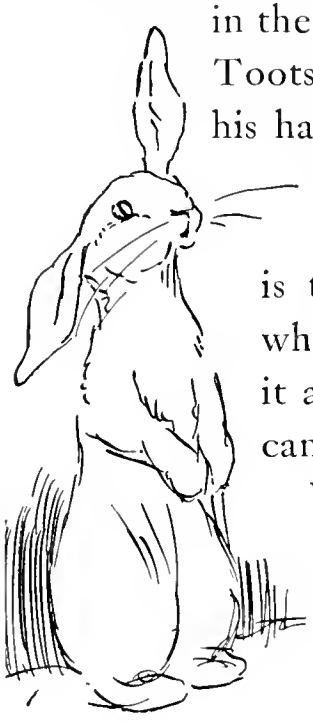
"Well, I shan't go without my breakfast any longer, simply because it is my duty to

carry the early news to people who are too stupid to listen to it," chirped Pwit-Pwit. "I'm half-starved. Come, we will call on the old gray rabbit. There is no one so wise as he in all the Menial World—and he always saves a choice morsel for me, though I must confess that I prefer the fare of Mahmoud."

It was only a few steps to the snowy hillside where the old gray rabbit watched over his large family, the youngest of which was a snow-white great-granddaughter. Without waiting for a special invitation, Pwit-Pwit took possession of a bread crust, and was pecking at it greedily, when a wonderful thing happened. The old gray rabbit, ignoring the sparrow, hopped slowly over to where Toots and the Princess stood leaning upon the top rail of his yard fence.

"Good morning," said the boy.

The rabbit stuck one of its ears straight up and allowed the other to hang down over his cheek, meanwhile moving his flexible lips in the most extraordinary fashion. Toots laughed aloud and clapped his hands, saying: "Thank you, Grandpa Rabbit, my crooked leg is cured. This is the Princess. Her father, who is a great surgeon, made it as straight as its mate. You can see for yourself."



With perfect confidence in Toots' ability to understand the rabbit language, the Princess bowed, and then stroked Grandfather Rabbit's ear. Then he hopped still closer to the fence and made a long speech with his ears and flexible lips. And this is what he said:

The rabbit stuck one of its ears straight up.

"Little boy, I rejoice at your good fortune. While your poor leg was still crooked, and the iron clanked upon it, and you were as thin and pale as you are now brown and stout, you never neglected me. I always felt that you understood me and mine better than those great careless men who come with the bread and the cabbage-leaves, but with never a word of greeting. Even now, when the ground is white and cold, you do not forget us. We feel that you are one of us. It is not given to all of the Menial People to speak as plainly as I do, but you have my earnest assurance that all have the same feeling of affection toward you."

While the rabbit was speaking, Pwit-Pwit, having satisfied his hunger, hopped up beside him, and told him of the disgraceful conduct of the bears and the racoons.

"I could have told you," answered the

rabbit, "that the first snow would deprive you of all companionship on the part of those people. It was their custom before being taken into captivity to sleep steadily through all the freezing weather. My people understood it well, for then we had only the wildcats, the wolves and the foxes to fear."

"But how could they live so long without eating?" demanded Pwit-Pwit. "When the weather is cold, my appetite is sharper than ever."

"They lived upon their fat," answered the old gray rabbit. "All the time the leaves were falling the bears ate grapes and berries in the forest, until they were so fat they could hardly walk. I remember we were never afraid of them then, they were so slow and clumsy. It was the same with the racoons. All night they would steal along the

margin of the river, gorging themselves with clams, fish and young ducks, and sometimes would go into the fields for the juicy, green corn. So, when the first snow came, they, too, were almost too fat to walk.

"Then," continued the old gray rabbit, "the bears would crawl into the farthest corner of their caves, while the racoons would curl up into furry rings at the ends of their burrows, and there they would sleep soundly until the warm sun should again melt the snow. All these things I know well, for it is during the first warm days of spring that the rabbits are ever on the alert because of the gaunt figures of the half-starved bears, awakened by their hunger, which then prowl over the land."

"Ah, now I understand," chirped Pwit-Pwit. "Well, now that the bears and the racoons care no longer for the news, I shall

have more time than ever to devote to dear old Mahmoud, and to Fatimah and the hippopotamus baby."

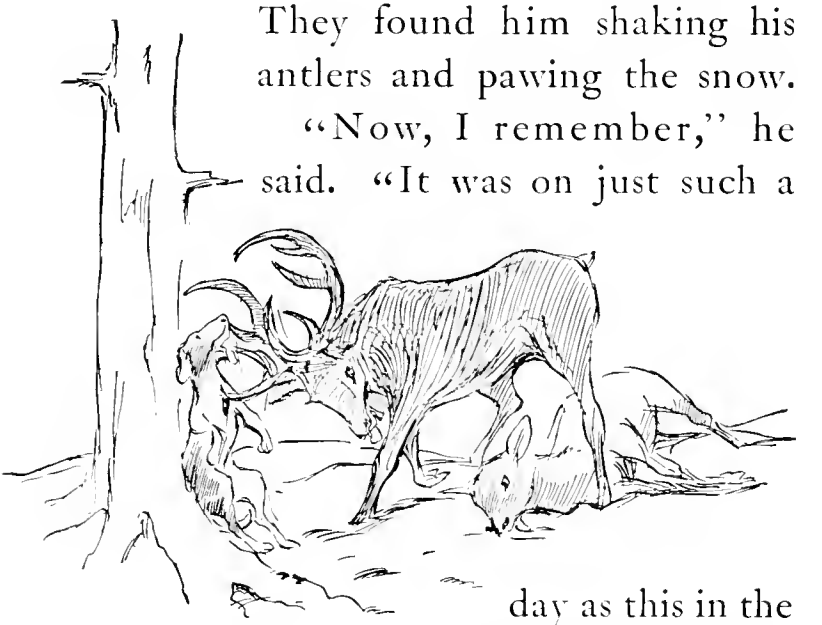
Just then there came a wild bellow from the direction of Wapiti's yard.

"It's Wapiti," said Pwit-Pwit, much excited. "Come at once. He remembers."

"If it is the deer you are about to visit," said the rabbit, "I would warn you that his people are apt to be dangerous when the snow is on the ground. It is then that they suffer from hunger, and are none too gentle with their sharp prongs."

But Pwit-Pwit said that he had a perfect understanding with

Wapiti, and flew away, followed by Toots and the Princess, both eager to know what it was that the red deer had remembered.



They found him shaking his antlers and pawing the snow.

"Now, I remember," he said. "It was on just such a day as this in the great forest that my gentle, tender-eyed mate was taken from me. There were two fierce dogs that sprang at her throat. But this was not until the iron in the man's hand had spoken, and my mate had fallen to her

knees, with the blood gushing from her mouth. Look, Pwit-Pwit, little one, do you see that prong, broken short off?"

"Yes," answered the sparrow, eagerly.

The red deer tossed his head savagely, then bellowed fiercely:

"It was with that same prong that I pinned one of the dogs to a tree, so that he never barked again. I left the prong sticking to his heart."

"Served him right," said Pwit-Pwit. "I can't bear dogs; they're as bad as cats."

"But my poor mate was dead," continued Wapiti, "and while I was mourning over her body, the men came and bound me fast with cords. That is why you find me here."

With that, they took leave of the red deer, and with the sparrow in the lead, proceeded to the Elephant House.

"By this time," said Toots, "the lion cubs

will have ceased their chatter over the white carpet the heavens laid on the earth in the night, and we shall be able to get in a word."

Mahmoud and the Duchess stood as near the front of their house as the chains on their legs would let them, and seemed eager for visitors. They greeted Pwit-Pwit cordially, stretching out their trunks to him. The sparrow hopped upon that of Mahmoud, and said:

"Where are your eyes, old friend? Here is the little Limping Boy back again, and you give him not so much as a flap of your ear in greeting."

"Alas, my eyes give me small service these days," said the elephant; "yet I would have sworn that the lad who follows you hither with the little butterfly maiden is stout and brown and well-clad, and with two good, straight legs under him. Can it be that my

ears are growing dull, also, that I failed to hear the clank of the iron on his leg?"

Thus speaking, Mahmoud put forth his trunk, and with the two fingers at its end felt carefully of Toots' legs, first of one and then of the other. Then he drew back and blew a puff of wind through his trunk that ruffled Pwit-Pwit's feathers, saying playfully:

"And so, Pwit-Pwit, little one, thou wouldst jest with thy most faithful of friends? Nay, the lad is well-favored and good to look upon, but he is not the little Limping Boy."

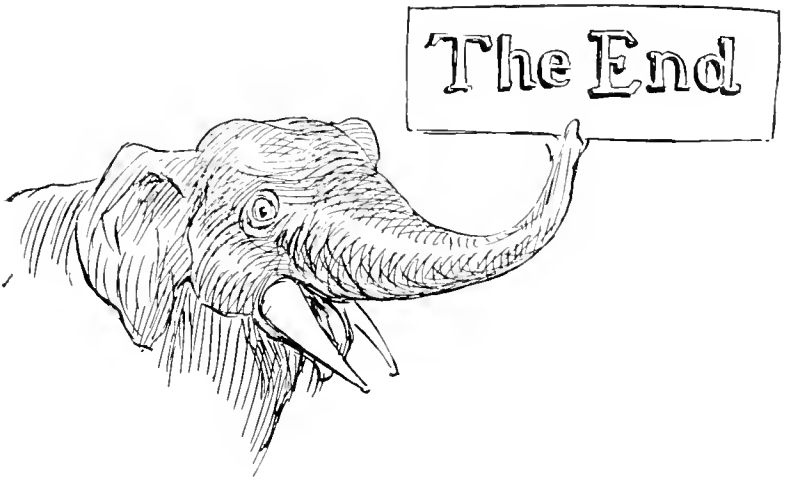
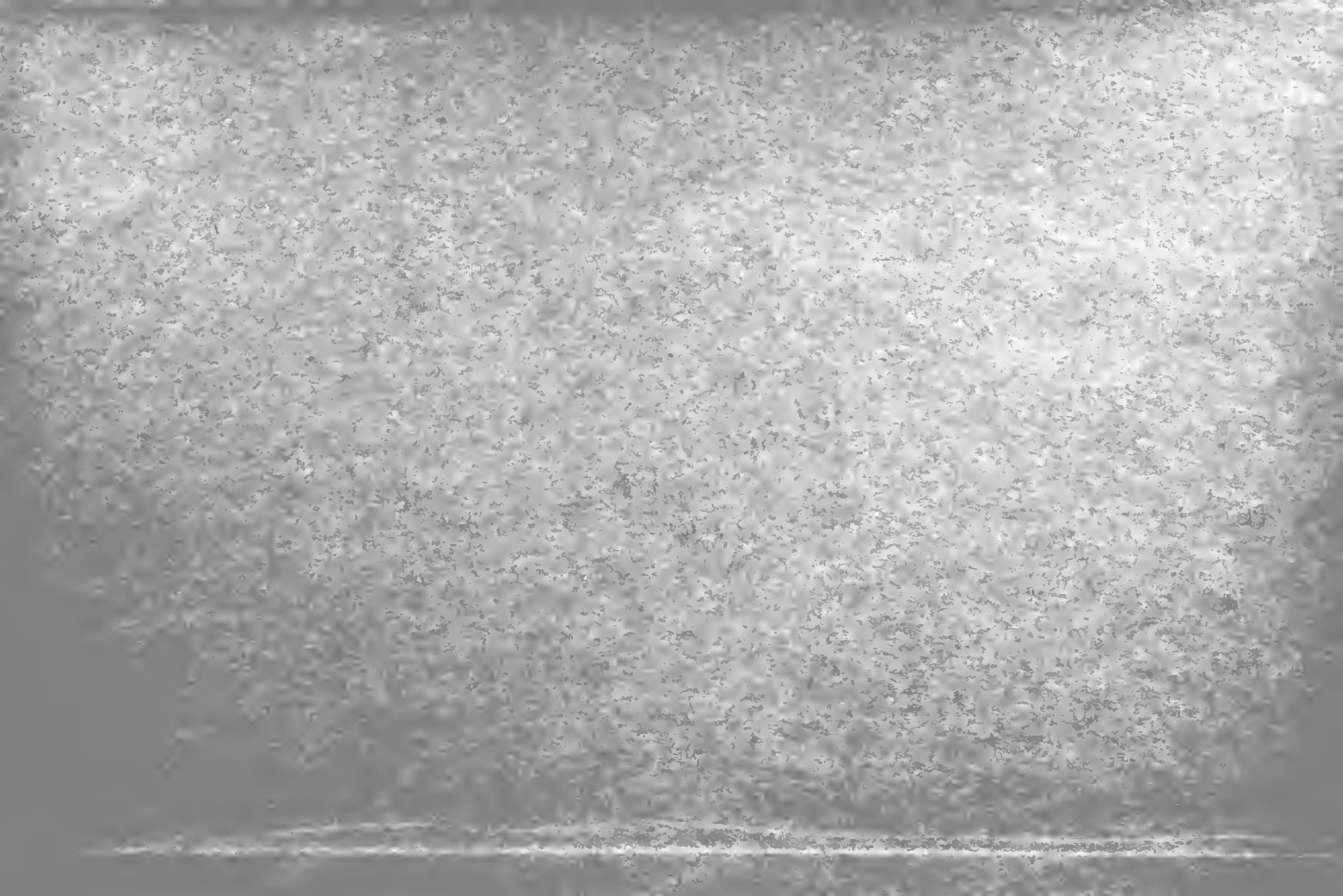
And Mahmoud, turning his head resolutely, began carrying to his mouth the stack of hay the Keeper had placed before him. Toots felt his heart torn as by a great sorrow.

"Mahmoud! Mahmoud!" he sobbed, holding out his arms.

But the elephant gave no heed to the

boy, and the sparrow had flown away.

Toots burst into tears.

"It is sad," said the Princess, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, "but it is better to be strong like other boys."

And she led him away, and when next Toots and the Princess visited their friends of the Menial World, he was tall, with hair on his lip, and she was slender and very fair; and they looked only in each other's eyes.